THE ATONING LIFE

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THE ATONING LIFE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

THE ATONING LIFE

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1908

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Set up and electrotyped. Published April, 1908.

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Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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To

THE FRIENDS

WHO HAVE MADE LIFE SPACIOUS

AND SEARCHING

PREFACE

THIS little book has some faults whereof its author is keenly aware, and others that he cannot know. But the reader is asked to remember that it does not set out to become a chapter in systematic theology. Its aim is to make clear the lines of approach to the Atonement. One of the pressing needs of minister and layman alike is a vital theology that springs from life and, returning quickly to the life out of which it sprang, gives form and clarity to experience. The hope that this little book may help some of his brethren toward that goal gives the author the courage to publish it.

O God, our great Companion, lead us, day by day, deeper into the mystery of life, and make us interpreters of life to our fellows, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Springhead of Wonder	1
II.	The Proving-Ground of Reality	14
III.	Divine and Human Freedom	27
IV.	The Sovereign Will called Faith	42
V.	Law the Final Problem of Life	57
VI.	The Mystery of Pleasure	74
VII.	The Mystery of Pain	90
VIII.	Forgiveness and Law	107
IX.	The Atoning Life	124
X.	The Healing Question	140

THE ATONING LIFE

CHAPTER I

THE SPRINGHEAD OF WONDER

WHEN we have gone deep into life and when, our youthful illusions about ourselves and our world having been shattered, the hand of Christ lifts us out of the mire, sets our feet on the rock, and orders our goings, we find within our own being a spring of wonder and self-enjoyment whose flow all the forces of the world cannot stop. The follower of Jesus, as a man redeemed, finds God in his heart, God in his plenitude of power and grace. His soul trembles in the presence of the Almighty. The infinitude of the divine being so overpowers him that his mind almost swoons. The beauty of God fills him with ecstasy and awe.

But he does not lose himself in the divine presence.

The divine infinitude does not swallow him up, nor rob him of his self-possession. The nearer he draws to God, the surer becomes his hold upon himself. Intimacy with the Almighty gives body to his individual powers. Friendship with the All-knowing One kindles and strengthens his little candle of knowledge. And in this union of the deepening sense of the divine majesty with the clearer consciousness of self the fountain of self-renewing joy in life breaks forth from the everlasting hills.

The man redeemed does not delude himself regarding his own capacity or the make of the society of which he forms a part. He strives to see life steadily and to see it whole. Life's burdens and disappointments, — he thanks God that he has his full share of them. His own sin tortures him. He wrestles with a single fault for many years, and, whenever he reports the conflict truly, finds his adversary still strong. His work, if he dares look at it, terrifies him with its imperfections. To be on good terms with himself, to know himself intimately and to continue to enjoy himself, — how may that be?

He does not for a moment separate himself from society. In his searchings after self-knowledge and self-mastery, every step takes him deeper into fellowship. All the world's good is his. And all the world's evil is his. He cannot pretend to know Christ and dream himself into some little heaven whither no sound of the world's evil and sorrow and shame can come. Full salvation, the sense of the Saviour's mastery over the evil in himself and his fellows, comes to him in the world or comes to him nowhere. If he finds it hard to endure himself, much more to enjoy himself when he lives with himself, what shall he do when he takes himself as a single cell within the vast organism of human life? He dare not turn monk. That were too easy. The apparent nobility of such a choice covers over the ignobleness of an awful postponement. To turn monk would be to put off the final question. He will stand fast in his place and seek the saving knowledge of the Lord.

Standing there, the God and Father of Jesus Christ seeks him and finds him. He learns that the deepest fact of experience is the intimacy between God and

himself. God the Almighty! God the Eternal! and he the creature of a day, with feeble power and a knowledge that goes just far enough to discover an overwhelming ignorance. Yet the joy and the wonder of salvation! He and God are inseparable. He cannot live without God. But God will not live without him. The infinitude of God is not a fathomless gulf into which he looks and shudders. God is light. And the infinitude of God lives within his weakness and limitations even as the might and majesty of the sun live within the flickering candle. God's presence safeguards his right to be himself, and his right to know and master himself.

The religious drift of our time, its easy and instinctive motion, is towards Pantheism. For increasing numbers of people the traditional definitions and conceptions of Christian theology have lost power and appeal. At the same time the Universe in its vastness is pressing hard upon the mind. The age of our mother-earth makes time, for the imagination, infinite. The scientific knowledge of the heavens makes space practically infinite. Within the working infinite of

time and space men are as bare specks or dots. To use Pope's lines,

> "As bubbles on the sea of matter born,
> They rise, they break, and to that sea return."

Now Pantheism is like the sick lion in the Fable. He sent out invitations to all his subjects to visit him in his cave, having a deep desire to look on their faces and to exchange courtesies. But the fox refused to go, observing that all the tracks turned one way. Of all those who went to pay their respects to his sick majesty, none returned. So is it with Pantheism. The promise of individuality within us, seeking for its kith and kin in the unseen universe and driven into religion to avoid brain-sickness and heart-sickness, goes to see the Absolute and is devoured.

But in the Christian view of the world individuality is the whole stake and prize. The Christian consciousness reconciles the infinitude of God and the personality of man. Or, putting it in a better way, in the Christian consciousness the individuality of man is discovered and interpreted as the medium through which the divine infinitude is appreciated and under-

stood. To the people, called Christians, who have taken Christ for their souls' Captain, the measureless spaces and forces of the Universe, pressing irresistibly upon the mind do but deepen the wonder of their life.

In the glory of the stars, in the might of the tides, God comes near to the Christian. The nearer God comes to him, the surer is his hold on himself. His awe of God gives splendid promise to his self-knowledge. He discovers the ground of his individuality to be as deep as God's own being. In his own heart the divine majesty reveals itself as the safeguard of his rights. For all his rights, in other words all his claims on life, reduce to a single right, namely, the right to grow in the knowledge and mastery of self. And the God and Father of Jesus Christ, taking up into Himself the attributes with which the visible Universe is clothed, reveals Himself to the redeemed man as one who puts His entire being and power and plan in pledge, to the end that man may grow to full stature. It is not the lines of Pope, but the lines of Sidney Lanier that express the truth.

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold, I will build me a nest on the greatness of God."

The Christian's individuality grows upon the divine being, is not absorbed by it. His relation to God is not a vague, though ecstatic, relation to the Absolute, but a personal relation to an infinite, holy, and creative will which is at work within his nature, building him up in the divine likeness. His will to be his fullest self gains edge and temper from growing intimacy with the divine perfection. He refuses the tempting pathos of the view which regards him as "a bit of morning cloud in the infinite azure of the past." The pith and marrow of him is a strong and masterful will. He flinches from nothing that life can yield of terror and toil and pain. But through his friendship with the Eternal he joins sweetness to strength. His kinship to God is his title-deed to a radiant and heroic manhood, into which no touch of pathos can enter, and which at the same time kindles in him a cleansing fire of shame and longing, a fire that searches his nature and purpose through and through. While he lives, he lives mightily. And when he dies, he crosses the

great divide with a serene and steadfast hope of closer intimacy with God.

So his knowledge of God and his knowledge of self become inseparable. Together they widen. Together they are clarified. Self-knowledge is the key to all. Through it he wins entrance into the being and purpose of the Eternal. He does not, then, do honor to the true God by sacrificing clarity of self-knowledge to the joys of mystic communion. To lose himself were to lose the true God. Through the sanctity and clarity of self-knowledge his knowledge of God becomes penetrating. God's Word becomes a two-edged sword, cleaving through all illusion and half-truths. His awe of God and his love of God become a single and indivisible emotion.

The contemplation of the divine attributes opens to him a profound enjoyment of self. The divine omnipresence means that all things in their several beings and values are real to God. The contemplation of the divine omnipresence puts the spur upon his powers and faculties. It is enough for him that he is being made in God's image. Little by little he masters his van-

ity and his fear, and climbs to the clear and untroubled vision of things as they are.

The contemplation of the divine omnipotence does not discourage and paralyze him; it rather gives him heart and hope. It is true that he is the creature of an hour. His strength counts for as little as the sand on the seashore, the bit of floating cloud in the sky. It is true that he has nothing of his own. All he has belongs to God. But herein lies his greatness. He works out his own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in him to will and to do of His own good pleasure. This is commonly called the paradox of the spiritual life. But the word is wholly out of place. There is no paradox. The Apostle Paul describes two sides of a single experience. When the soul feels and knows the true God, all is God's and everything is one's own. Salvation is one's own achievement, because salvation is God's achievement wrought out within the working and struggling will of man. The contemplation of the divine omnipotence fills the Christian with fear and trembling. But it is the fear and trembling of one who for the first time

stands in the presence of a supremely beautiful object, like the Yellowstone. His heart throbs. His being expands. The omnipotence of God has become man's title-deed to measureless and illimitable growth.

His knowledge of things, when he views the universe as it is in itself, tempts him to suicide. He knows just enough to make his ignorance terrifying. His knowledge is like a candle burning in a little clearing within the forest primeval. Every stir of wind threatens it with extinction. Its flickering is incessant. Rarely does it burn clear. And the feeble circle of light surrounding it makes visible the immeasurable darkness concealing powers which he cannot measure and cannot name. But let him gain personal knowledge of God, and then his ignorance becomes his inspiration. God is the teacher and he the pupil.

> "What delights can equal those
> That stir the spirit's inmost deeps,
> When one that loves and knows not, reaps
> From one who loves and knows."

It is true that the more penetrating his knowledge of life becomes, the deeper is his consciousness of igno-

rance. It is true that the clearer is his analysis of knowledge, the wider stand the gates through which things unknown assail him. But he loves to have it so. He knows nothing. But God knows all. And the pains of ignorance that pierce him through and through, what are they but the price he pays for the privilege of kinship to the Omniscient? His ignorance and his knowledge blend into a single mental action. And through it the majesty and the splendor of the mind of God dawn upon him with a beauty that is as intimate as it is compelling.

If the Christian were asked to give his impression of God in a single phrase, he would say, God's restraint. He knows, to his shame he knows, that his own growth in knowledge and power is not attended by an equivalent growth in restraint. His knowledge, if it comes to be large and imposing, imperils the mental freedom of other men. If he has much to impart and has the gift of expression in large measure, he is fairly sure to talk other people down. He dominates the minds of others, does not create individuality in them. And as to his power, his inbred tendency is to assert it to its limit.

That is the instinctive tendency of all human power. Thus the man in the automobile, with a wonderful instrument obedient to his hand, uses the power of his machine to the utmost, forgetting the rights of other people. The same thing holds true of political power. The tendency to despotism is ingrained. The object of all constitutional government is to furnish power with checks and balances, imposing upon it limits which it dare not pass over. The most serious struggle of civilization is to keep the law from becoming, in Solon's terrible phrase, like the net which holds the little fish, while the big fish break through. This inbred tendency of human power masters us even in the holiest places. The head of the family becomes a despot from whose loving tyranny there is no escape. The teacher turns his sceptre into a rod or a spear. The friend destroys the bloom and fragrance of friendship by overbearing the one he loves.

God, as the Christian knows Him, has a restraint as strong as His omnipotence. His power is infinite, His knowledge illimitable. If a man were God, then woe to his fellow-men. His very goodness would

become their bane. He would establish a tyranny swallowing the individuality of men, in order to keep them from sin. But how wonderful is our God. His attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience do not imperil man's right to be his fullest self. They safeguard and insure that right. And while the friend of God admires Him for many things, this is the summit of his admiration. God's restraint is as deep as His being and His power.

Here, then, is the springhead of wonder. To the man who has found himself in Christ, the old things have passed away. All things become new. The follower of Jesus, the friend of God, when life presses him hard, drinks from the brook that flows by the road and lifts up his head with unconquerable hope.

CHAPTER II

THE PROVING-GROUND OF REALITY

WHEN the Christian finds himself in God, he is not alone. He finds his Neighbor close beside him. God, as He is known in Christ and in His Word, is not the Absolute, the unrelated Infinite, prisoner of His own infinitude, but the All-related One. God's deepest difference from us lies in His capacity for relationships, infinite in number and each one of them going as deep as His nature. The relationships into which God enters are not relationships which He can put on or put off at will. They are part and parcel of His own eternal nature and purpose. When the follower of Jesus knows himself in God, he knows a being who has no spiritual meaning or value apart from his Neighbor.

The mystic would fain see God as He is in Himself. To obtain the beatific vision, he will even turn monk.

If need be, he will sacrifice his relationships with other men, assessing them as matters of secondary reality. The relationship of his soul to God he takes to be the primary reality. To reach that reality he subjects himself to a splendid discipline, a superb self-denial. One by one he puts away the social bonds that hold him fast within the mutual obligations that constitute the common life. He seeks to become a pure spiritual essence, the soul, in order that he may reach the saving contemplation of the pure divine reality. But the God of the mystic is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ. The true God, whose method of self-revelation is recorded and attested in the Scriptures, discloses His inmost secrets only to people living in families and constituting the nation.

The mystic does not reach the full-grown Christian conception of divine and human reality. In order to enjoy the ecstasy of union with God, he throws his individuality into the divine abyss. But in the Christian view of the universe, individuality is the whole stake and issue. How to conceive of God so that the nearer man comes to God, the more

does he abound in the human sense, the more individual does he become — that is the issue between the Christian view of reality and other religious views. The divine abyss is found only in the heart of man. The deeper the Christian's life with God, the more deeply does he enter into the common lot, and the more seriously does he take his relationships with his fellows.

The final law of life is given in the words of Jesus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The Christian's God, the Christian's self, the Christian's Neighbor, — here are the three component elements of ultimate reality. They may not be disentangled. Not one of the three can be fully known or appreciated without the others. If the Christian takes his own soul to be a more solid reality than his relation to his neighbor, if he thinks away his social obligations in order to reach divine reality, he loses all. His Neighbor and he are coördinate realities. Only

in their common substance and value can the true God be known as He knows Himself.

Here, then, is the proving-ground of reality. And not only the proving-ground of reality for human beings putting themselves to hard labor for their nation and their race, but the proving-ground of the reality that is real for God. God can be known only in the degree and measure of His self-revelation. He clearly reveals Himself nowhere save in the deep of human fellowship. The Christian view is perfectly expressed in the First Epistle of St. John. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. There is nothing in God that holds itself aloof, refuses to enter into relationship with men. In the inmost recess of ultimate reality there is concealed nothing that will oppose itself to man's longing for personal and social perfection. And man, once redeemed, cannot think of himself save in the midst of his fellows. Human fellowship and partnership and commerce, based upon and issuing from man's fellowship with God, — that is the pith and marrow of saving truth.

Revelation and fellowship are, therefore, as insepa-

rable as the concave and convex sides of a circle. Neither of them is possible, in high degree, without the other. The perfecting of one involves the completion of the other. If we say that we love God and love not our Neighbor, we lie and do not speak the truth. If I seek, in mystic vision, to see God face to face and, soaring from some mountain-top of contemplation, take wing into the Infinite Being, I deceive myself, and sooner or later bring upon myself a fall into hideous unrealities. My Neighbor is as real to me as I am to myself. His being and my being, interknitting, give to God the only medium of revelation commensurate with His nature. To those who are greatly individual and whose individuality stands deep in social obligation, He speaks a gladdening and saving message. Between Him and them passes a living Word that gives unity and meaning to our existence, sweetness and strength to our joy in life.

My Neighbor's will and mine, interlocking, give to God the one means whereby His holy will and saving plan can grip history and hold it fast, guiding and directing it towards its final goal. The end of history

is the imposing of moral form on the raw material of human life. All culture aims to make raw material submit itself to form. A noble woman's voice, through years of tireless training, blends art with nature into an indivisible force that lifts us out of ourselves. A great poet blends sound and rhythm and sense and imagination into poetry of the grand style, and the world is enriched. The sculptor weds his idea to marble and to bronze, and there comes to light a form of manly dignity or womanly beauty that invites us to eternize ourselves. In the measure that we transmute existence into life by means of culture, we impose form on raw material.

But moral form and culture is of all forms the highest and most difficult. How shall we moralize human nature so that every human being shall be, and be valued as a thing of infinite worth? Lust and passion and ambition surge through us like a tide. At our best, we are not so far away from the brute that we dare boast about our gains. And at our worst we are far below the brutes. Our reason makes us capable of falling into depths of cruelty and vileness which it were

an outrage on justice to call bestial. The beasts have never tortured the conquered as have the Assyrians and the Iroquois. The beasts never used the thumbscrew and the rack and the stake in honor of the powers higher than themselves. And the beasts have never made lust the conscious end of existence. When man is at his worst, he is immeasurably worse than the beasts.

The monk in us bids us give up the attempt to moralize the vast mass of human lust and cruelty and inertness. Let us go apart with those of like mind and seek moral and spiritual perfection. So alone may we hope to achieve sainthood. But the genius of Christianity, when we take it rightly and largely, forbids this step. We will stand fast in our place. We will be in the world but not of the world. With the help of the Great Companion, we will impose moral form upon this vast mass of human nature and motive. My Neighbor and I will knit our wills into a common will and cast our hopes in the mould of a common hope, so that, through our corporate hope and purpose, God may give moral culture and value to the life of man.

The proving-ground of reality is also the proving-

ground of knowledge. So far as the Christian's experience is concerned, the searching questions regarding the nature of knowledge and the source of certainty are unanswerable on purely philosophic grounds. His knowledge of God, the ultimate reality, carries him just far enough to know that he is known. The process of his knowing goes just deep enough to discover that God's revelation underpins his reasoning. And the logic of Christian experience shuts him up within the bounds of fellowship, as the only place where God clearly reveals Himself. There alone can a saving word regarding human life and motive be spoken. There or nowhere is the proving-ground of knowledge.

Where shall the ultimate reality be found? And when I have found it, how shall I know that I know it? Only when I have gone deep into my relationships with my fellows of every degree and kind, when I have learned to take my Neighbor's wishes and longings and choices as equally real with my own. Then, having grown out of the crude and narrow self into the true and abiding self, I shall have acquired in some degree that high art of putting and pressing final questions,

which is the pith of wisdom. There are certain questions, searching and cleansing, about the meaning and value of life. To the follower of Jesus, possessed of His secret, there is but one place where such questions can be sanely and hopefully asked. When my Neighbor's being and my being interknit, and when his will and mine interlock to create and maintain a living corporate being and purpose, then, within that living corporate consciousness and longing, Revelation wells up, the living God speaks home to our hearts and brings our restless reason to rest.

How shall I know that I know the innermost nature and meaning of things? How shall I become possessed of a knowledge from which reality does not shrink away, leaving it brain-sick and heart-sick? Reason alone cannot bring it to me. Reason and will must join and interfuse in an act of saving faith. I must find myself within a supreme plan and purpose regarding history, concerning human nature as a whole. This means that my views of things, if they are to acquire and maintain moralizing power, must work up into a creative attitude towards life. It is at this

point that the Christian begins to understand the ground and worth of his belief in creation. Science can say nothing to him regarding the creation of the world. And when Science ventures to speak about it, she forgets herself and transcends her function. Even pure Philosophy labors in vain to attain it. The belief in the creation of the world is an organic part of a larger whole; it is part and parcel of the creative attitude towards life taken in its entirety. Only by believing in the creative power of God can we, when once we have seen human life in its full scope, live the creative life in the midst of our fellows. God reveals Himself to us as a power and purpose high and lifted up and holy. The man who is redeemed from his narrow and vulgar self, resting upon the creative will and being of the Great Commander, takes and steadily maintains a creative attitude towards society, towards his nation and his race. The belief in the creative life of God and man, while science and philosophy fall silent, forces itself on the heart of the people whom Christ hath redeemed, as a necessary, an inevitable act of faith.

A cheap and self-indulgent pessimism will say to the creative will in us, "Life is a poor player

> "'That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.'
>
> "'We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.'"

But the Christian has found the sacramental meeting-place where God cheers and strengthens His sons and daughters. The gladness of the creative life is theirs. It is given to few to be creative in the field of literature and art. But in that matter which is the main concern of us all, the great business of being human, it is within the reach of all.

Having met God and been saved by God working through Christ, our deepest desire is to know our fellows and to know God in them. We pass through two periods of longing after knowledge. At first we long to know things. As we walk through the stack

of a great library, every book becomes a challenge. And when, that challenge ringing in our ears, we go forth to measure our knowledge with the universe, our own minds become a purgatory, so keen and piercing is the pain of our ignorance. But by and by, through closer fellowship with our race and a widening comprehension of our task, another longing comes upon us like a strong man armed. The great library still stirs and challenges and inspires us. But far more deeply are we stirred by a crowd or even a mob of our fellows. To make our neighbors real to ourselves and to shape our life to our knowledge, this becomes our passion. We know so few. And those few we know so poorly. Perhaps, shrinking from soiling contact with the mob, we draw apart, and end by making our books our luxury. But not so does the Christian know Christ. From the library he goes to the city slum, where humanity becomes an open sore. There he finds his greatest task and his highest privilege. He longs to know all sorts and conditions of men and to know them well. And if ever he envies God His omniscience, it is when he realizes the narrowness of his own

sympathies and the resulting impoverishment that robs his goodness of its penetrative and redeeming power.

God's saving Word to man comes to men only when they have taken on themselves a complete personal and social obligation. It is revealed through the corporate will of redeemed spirits. It is published in terms of human fellowship. And it comes at our hearts as the Winged Victory in the Louvre comes at the lover of beauty mounting the stairs. Nothing in him can withstand the conviction which it brings. With the Word of God as a two-edged sword, he goes forth into the world conquering and to conquer.

CHAPTER III

DIVINE AND HUMAN FREEDOM

IN Christian experience God and man are defined together. The innermost nature of man is individuality, his ability to know and to master himself. The innermost nature of God is that union of power and restraint which makes intimacy with God the stronghold of man's right to himself. God and man are personal beings.

Personality, being our ultimate fact, cannot be defined. But we can describe it so far as our experience has disclosed it to us. The description may be put under three heads. In the first place, personality consists of clear self-knowledge. As we grow out of childhood, we grow into the knowledge of ourselves. Here is found both the glory and the tragedy of mature life. The tragedy, because, when once we clearly

know ourselves, there is no escape from piercing pain. What we have done and what we have left undone, brought into the light of an ideal that exalts itself high above our achievements, becomes a torture to the conscience. But self-knowledge is also the glory of life, because our little candle of self-knowledge throws its beam into the nature and will of God, upon whose mind our thinking rests. It is true that our knowledge of ourselves is at best imperfect, a promise rather than an achievement. But God knows Himself perfectly. In Him is no darkness at all. And into His relationship with us He puts His whole being, His entire purpose, so that our beginnings of self-knowledge are transfigured. Slight as it is, it is enough, since through it God reveals Himself to us and through us to our fellows. The child learns the alphabet, and it turns out to be the open door into the republic of letters, wherein, by and by, he earns the suffrage. Even so we learn the alphabet of self-knowledge, and lo! we enter into communion with God and man. Therefore we have the courage and patience to toil mightily that we may make advances in the art and wisdom of know-

ing ourselves, because deepening knowledge of self brings to light the saving knowledge of God. Our self-knowledge, built upon God's perfect and entire knowledge of Himself, makes us persons.

The second aspect of personality which experience gives us is self-mastery. As we grow out of childhood, the ideal of life comes to be an increasing self-control. To guide ourselves, to make decisive choices, to plan wisely, and to work out the logic of our choice into a ripening purpose — this is our aim. It is true, again, that our self-mastery is an imperfect and struggling thing. If we take it to be a great or considerable thing, we deceive ourselves. If we know ourselves with some measure of clearness, then we know that our victories over self have been gained at a great price. There's not one of them that did not cost sweat and blood. Again and again the issue and upshot of the battle with ourselves hung in the balance. And no sooner is a victory hardly won, than fresh conflicts open before us. Every success becomes an opportunity for larger action. Up out of our nature and out of the general human nature of which we form a part, new elements

of experience are constantly rising. To work them into our plan and purpose involves increasing conflict and strain. As we look back we tremble when we see how near we came, a hundred times, to failure. And the failures! The closets of our memory are filled with ghosts. Our ideal involves not only self-mastery in external things, but complete self-control in interior things, the perfect keeping of the heart out of which come the issues of life. In the light of that ideal, one's achievements fall miserably short.

But our struggling and straining will takes us far enough to make the discovery that an eternal will is at work within our will. Then we go a little way with our discovery and find the truth to be that our will is within that other will, the will of God. Our plan and purpose realize their meaning as part of an eternal purpose which subjects them to a fiery criticism, but which criticises in order to save. God's mind discloses itself in our hearts as holy and complete in its self-masterhood. His will reveals itself through our struggles after goodness and masterhood. By our kinship and relation to Him, the promise of self-

mastery, in the face of all our shortcomings, becomes more trustworthy day by day.

The third aspect of personality is the capacity for self-communication, the art of expression. In all high things, in art and letters and song, we live by expression. But the kind of expression with which personality deals is of all kinds the most difficult. We seek to express ourselves in terms of our relationship with our neighbors. The raw material the artist handles is obstinate enough, rebels against his purpose, refuses to take form from his mind and hand. The raw material of morality is vastly more recalcitrant. Human nature in ourselves and in our race resists the ideal in a thousand ways. Yet the ideal of personality involves a perfect expression of self in terms of our kinship to all men. The test of truth, in the long run, lies in its ability to put the language of common people to noble uses. Silence is golden only when a man has great things on his mind. And even then it is not golden, unless it is the preparation for deep and simple utterance. Goodness is nothing better than a veneer upon evil, if it does not cast itself

in the mould of the common lot and the common welfare. A great person is a being greatly individual, yet having a gift for communion with his fellows equal to his individuality. That is the ideal. Unless we bend all our powers to its service, we are false to the Christian conception of self-knowledge and self-mastery. For in the measure that we know and master ourselves, the glory of life comes to be the revelation of the living God in our hearts. His word, unless it goes forth from our hearts winged with power to reach all mankind, falls dead. The spring of divine revelation runs dry. The deepest reality and truth cannot be brought to light except through our commerce and conversation with our neighbors.

We cannot be persons if we take an elective course in human association. If we group ourselves with our own sort, with those closely resembling us in culture and manner and social standing, we cease to be true individuals.

Nothing short of mankind in the mass is the material with which we must deal. Therefore personality implies and involves a creative attitude towards human

life taken in its entire scope. This means that in so far as we are real Christians, we live and breathe in the hope of moralizing and redeeming our Race. But this hope, in its turn, involves a vast margin between things as they are and things as we mean to make them. We find such a margin in our own natures. We could not live for a day on terms of intimacy with ourselves if the friendship of God had not made real to us that ideal self, that true soul of ours which is superior to all our failures and littleness and sins. There is an immeasurable margin between what we are and what we are bound to become. And through the grace of God we look at that margin with the same confidence with which the American farmer looks at the untilled prairie. Every acre of it calls for the plough. Even so, in our hearts the boundless margin between our present state and our future perfection calls to the ploughshare of divine and human strength. We claim the margin as our own in fee. And in that claim stands our freedom in dealing with our own nature.

So, too, we see a vast margin between society as it

is and society as we mean to make it. Society as it is! Were it not for our faith in God we should not dare to look at it with eyes clear and undimmed. We should try to play once more the child's game of make-believe. We should try to hypnotize ourselves into a fool's paradise. But the Christian who has in some degree attained to self-knowledge and who faces his own stubborn, sinful nature with radiant confidence and joyous freedom, can find in society no foes to God and man that can make him flinch. The splendid margin between things as they are and things as they shall be, through faith in the living God who builds his throne in the hearts of men, becomes his own in fee. In his claim to it stands his freedom.

My Neighbor and I, each finding himself in God, each finds the other close beside him. Each takes the infinite worth of the other as a starting-point of thought. Neither of us is able, without the other's help, to see the truth as it is in Jesus. Welded by common hope and need into a common purpose, we look around us on the earth to take stock of our possessions, our privileges, and our tasks.

But if we would see straight and think straight, we must be careful to clear our heads before we take account of stock. There is a certain distinction, the distinction between Church and State, which has played a great part in the past and has a part to play in the future. But it is no help to clear thinking on the ultimate question regarding the meaning and value of human life as a whole. It has immense value if used and applied as a subordinate truth. But, if taken as primary, it becomes a prolific mother of half-truths. We must view human life in its unity and totality. We have seen what monotheism, as a working conviction, comes to. What the scientific conviction regarding the unity of Nature does for reason, the vital belief in the unity of God does for the conscience. Nothing better can be said about the unity of Nature than John Stuart Mill said. To believe in the unity of Nature is to feel assured that there is nothing in the whole reach of the universe that can bring one's mind to permanent intellectual confusion. The Christian could ask for no finer expression of vital monotheism. It is an impassioned conviction

that there is nothing in the universe that can bring human conscience to permanent moral confusion. Our own being, individual and social, is full of things that give the lie to conscience. The forces of nature and history are apparently leagued together, again and again, to veto man's brave plan for moralizing all men and moralizing them completely. But we believe in the unity of God. The Divine Unity, revealing and authenticating itself in our hearts, becomes the foundation on which an indestructible conviction regarding the unity of humanity is built. On this rock Christ builds His Church. The gates of Hell, the united forces of inertia and brutality, fashion and sin, shall not prevail against her. Because we are Christians, we have an unconquerable faith in man. Out of our faith springs a mighty confidence in human freedom. And the belief in freedom enables us to look upon history as a moral process.

Freedom, as a political conception, began its career in Greece. In contrast with the Oriental monarchy and in contrast with the tyrannies which grew up on Greek soil, the ideal of freedom involved the existence

of a commonwealth whose members claimed equal rights and asserted equal obligations. Mutual rights and obligations, that is the essence of political freedom. In the absolute monarchy there was one law for the monarch, another for his subjects. Obligation was not equal to right. But in the free commonwealth right and obligation are of equal strength. No one is above the law. No one is below it.

The Christian, inheriting the ideal of freedom from the Greek, cannot develop it to its full extent unless he weds to it the belief in the unity and perfectibility of mankind. He cannot be content, as was the Greek, to build a commonwealth of freemen upon a base of servile population. No matter what his own individual prerogatives may be, they turn into a Nessus shirt and torture him, if he cannot hold fast to his conviction that his prerogatives are a leverage for the uplifting of the disfranchised. And the ultimate ground of his belief in human freedom is the revelation of the living God in his heart.

Human freedom rests on divine freedom. The innermost reality is a Holy Being and Will. The work-

shop of that Holy Will is not some distant Heaven, but the heart of man. The history of our mother earth fascinates us. We delight to guess at her descent from some nebula. And if we are happy enough to have reconciled our science and our faith, the creative power of God manifested in the universe confirms our knowledge of His creative power in our lives. But the stars are not our final witnesses to the being and will of God. His master-work is the personality of man. It is in the creation of individuality that we see Him at His best. The God of the Christian is the maker of men. He makes them individual. He makes them free.

How our freedom can be reconciled in thought with the omnipotence of God, religious metaphysic has never been able to explain. It seems to be necessary, if we are to have a rounded philosophy of religion, to sacrifice a part of our religious experience. But so long as we are content to live in Christ, making our metaphysic the servant of our experience, we cannot be brought to a stand by metaphysical difficulties. We know what we know. And what we know is that

God's will takes our will up into itself without destroying it. We know that the nearer our approach to Him and the clearer our vision of His being and beauty, the deeper goes the root of individuality in us, the closer becomes our grip on ourselves, the more do we abound in our own sense. In the full round of Christian experience man's freedom is found to be God's holiest gift. Herein is the ultimate fact and the final mystery of life.

Every fact that is large enough to be permanently interesting opens into mystery. A given fact purchases immunity from mystery by making itself too small to command an enduring attention. Therefore it does not surprise us that individuality becomes the supreme mystery. It is the supreme mystery because it is the supreme fact. We have gone a little way in the acquirement of self-knowledge and self-masterhood. But that little is enough to make life luminous and radiant. We have seen our God at His work. He is creating us in His image and likeness. He is creating us to be persons, creative individuals. The fact of our life in God and the mystery of it are inseparable.

When we have actually seen God at His work of making men, we can find no words to express our admiration of His restraint. But His restraint and His freedom are two aspects of one thing. As our experience deepens, we discover this to be a fundamental law for our guidance. Restraint and freedom are inseparable. Restraint must be as deep as freedom, else one man's freedom becomes another man's tyranny. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it comes to be a haunting fear lest our self-assertion may make it more difficult for others to be their best selves. We dread lest, in the enjoyment of our own powers, we may break down or weaken the individuality of others.

The truth about God and the truth about man are one and indivisible. Restraint is the inner aspect of freedom. Freedom is the outer aspect of restraint. Masterful self-assertion, in which respect for the rights of others is as deep as respect for one's self, that is the ideal of life. When that ideal rises clear before our eyes, we see God as Isaiah saw Him, high and lifted up. His glory fills the temple of reality. Our

hearts glow with admiration of Him. Strengthened and gladdened by His presence, we face our world. We feel bitter shame for every privilege that is not a leverage for the common betterment. Our increments of culture and knowledge and happiness, — we put them all in pledge for the uplifting of the downmost man. We devote ourselves to the inseparable ideals of freedom and law.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOVEREIGN WILL CALLED FAITH

THE followers of Jesus, when once they deeply know themselves, are people of one idea. Their views of life are summed up in a single conception, the Kingdom of God. If we would be true to the mind and logic of our Scriptures, we must take great pains at this point. For confusion of thought is easy, apparently necessary. But if we let the centre of our thinking shift from the Kingdom of God to some other conception, the distinguishing quality of our Religion is obscured.

In the first place, we must repeat it, the subject of our thought is the life of man in its entirety and unity. We cannot permit the Christian belief in personal immortality to throw the Christian scheme of truth out of bearing. Small wonder is it that personal immortality frequently fills our minds, to the exclusion

of every other thought except the thought of God. There are times when the strains and sorrows and losses of life make it almost inevitable. Besides, the educational value of the belief is beyond all estimate. It brings home to us the supreme reality of unseen things. It frees us from the strangle hold of the visible world. It detaches us from material and immediate ends, trains us to longmindedness, and develops in us the capacity to make the present the loyal servitor of a distant future. But in another way the belief can be so applied that it results in a serious injury to the frame of Christian truth. The immortality of the individual can be and often is separated, mentally and emotionally, from the larger view of which it forms a constituent part.

The Bible gives us the right perspective and proportion. It is the word of God to us, because it authenticates the logic of the divine revelation in us. Now the logic of the Scriptures does not start with the immortality of the individual as its premise. On the contrary, the starting-point is the unity and perfectibility of the nation. From this starting-point the

mind of Scripture moves on to the goal of the redeemed reason, the Kingdom of God. This fundamental conception takes up into itself, as an absolutely necessary instrument and medium, the immortality of the individual. But it is the Kingdom of God, not the immortality of the soul, that gives to the Christian his controlling and dominating point of view.

In the second place, we must clear our heads of the distinction between the visible and the invisible worlds. The educational value of the distinction is very great. It is a necessary part of our kindergarten training. But when we cease to think as children, when we put away childish thoughts of things eternal, this distinction falls to the ground. For when once the Saviour has gained entire control over our minds, when the cross has crucified our vanity and allayed our fear, when the unity of God has taken full possession of our mind, we know and feel the unity of life. Heaven is not another world. It is the over-world and the inner-world, the encompassing and interior reality of things. What we call this world is an enclosure from that wide field of reality. If we let it out to our

senses and they alone cultivate it, then it fences itself off from the reality that surrounds it. The enclosure becomes a prison. And when the soul takes up arms against the senses, the reality of the other world is exalted in order to beat down the reality of this world. But the man redeemed has a single world. He views all things in their relation to the Kingdom of God. Nature and History, the indivisible body of reality, are being guided by God toward a moral end and issue. He takes part in that plan and process, and so eternizes himself.

It is an old saying that Socrates brought down philosophy out of the clouds. He made it a part of life. Philosophy, as he practised it, has the right of way in the street and on the curbstone as truly as the pedler and the broker. Even so Jesus brought the Kingdom of God out of the clouds. By His life He gave it the right of way on earth. When He began His ministry, he found the field preëmpted and occupied by three tendencies. First, there was the Jewish monk, the Essene. Like the monk of all times and all places, he preserved his ideals by taking them apart from the

world. He attained the saving vision of unity and meaning in things by thinking away the substance and meaning of history. He took to himself the wings of the mystic and soared above the earth. Second, there was the Puritanizing Jew, the Pharisee. When times grew hard, when the heathen World Power laid a heavy and masterful hand on the conscience of Israel, and when God's delay in righting wrong seemed to be unbearable, the Pharisee sought to ease his heart and lessen the strain on his will by writing an Apocalypse. In it he not only called down the anger and terror of God upon the Heathen; he imagined them as poured out before his eyes. Thirdly, there was the way of the Galilean farmer and fisherman, the fellow-peasantry of Jesus. Looking for a path through those contradictions of terrestrial politics which vetoed the ideals of Israel, he could find no road except in an appeal to the sword. To trust in God and fight it out, — there was no other way.

Our Lord turned His back on all three methods. His mysticism preferred hands and feet to wings. It made Heaven the over-world and the inner-world of

the soul. By majestic moral genius He made His vision a part of sound and saving action. Like His fellow-peasants He took Israel's claim to a world-monarchy seriously. He could not endure the contradictions and gainsayals of world-politics and world-trade. He insisted that the hope of His nation was the sovereign and dominant reality. But He would not appeal to force. He sheathed the sword, once and forever. His method was the cross. His sinlessness made Him capable of perfect sympathy. The egotist, in proportion to his egotism, strips his neighbor's feelings and desires and plans of their reality, of their right to count and weigh in his final estimate of things. But to our Lord the things that were real to His neighbor were real to Him. His neighbor's desires, His neighbor's plans, were a primary part of His world. Nor did He, in thinking of His neighbor, take pains to pick and choose people who would be like-minded with Himself. On the contrary, His world of neighborliness included the people who were farthest away from Him in social sympathy, and who were most abhorrent to Jewish orthodoxy and nation-

Adam. The Samaritan outside the Jewish pale, the outcasts and the disinherited within it, these were His neighbors.

His method was the perfection of sympathy. He did not shield Himself against the brutality, the hostility, and the indifference of His world by hardening Himself. He exposed His inmost, without shield or breastplate, to the world's strokes. He accepted the cross as the rule of life. Shrined of religious individuality, this means that, by perfect sympathy and perfect spiritual imagination, He understood all His neighbors, of every kind and degree, and to Himself. He made the Kingdom of God inevitable. His underworld, the soul of all His preaching, was "the Kingdom of God is at hand." Now, if we would recognize and define the Kingdom of God in everyday language, it is nothing but the consummation of neighborliness. We sometimes say that, in the city, we live so close to one another that we have no neighbors, while in the country we live far enough apart to be neighborly. The suggestion and completion of the declaration is, Our sympathies do not grow with

the years. That highest form of imagination, which consists in realizing the individuality and rights of all our neighbors, — we do not cultivate it, and so, by and by, being underfed, it withers up. The vast mass of people are not real to us. But the Kingdom of God as our Lord conceived it is neighborliness. He realized the ideal. He made the Kingdom of God inevitable. He could say without ceasing, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

In the field of religion there is no kinship so interesting as that between Jesus and Buddha, and no contrast so striking. In both the masterhood that reveals itself through gentleness is the dominant trait. The mysticism of them both is that sweet and urgent mysticism in which the only reality is the reality of the inner life. Buddha took the interior truth of Hindoo thought, wherein severe and tireless thinking had succeeded in disproving the reality of everything save the mind, and universalized and popularized it. He wiped out the distinction of castes. He demonstrated the moral and spiritual dignity of all men. For this great victory, however, he paid a terrible

price, in that he stripped the political life, the historical career of man, of its primary meaning and value. Our Lord, on the contrary, like the Pharisee and the Peasant Revolutionist, took the unity and the hope of His nation as the staple of His thought. Through the cross He cleansed it of its violence, purified and perfected it. But He did not sacrifice the superb toughness of its moral fibre, nor did He throw away its magnificent grip and hold on history. He realized the nation's hope in terms of universal fellowship. He made the love of God and the love of man inseparable. He revealed the unity and fatherhood of God as the base and ground of unity in human experience.

To the question, What is the distinguishing quality and mark of Christianity amongst the world's religions? there is but one answer. It makes belief in the Kingdom of God inevitable. The Bible is the Book of Witness to the aim and method of divine revelation. The Christ is the heart and spring of the Bible. The Christ and His Book together make it possible for men and women who know their world

to act upon the conviction that history, the life of man in its unity and entirety, may be moralized.

The followers of Jesus do not deceive themselves regarding the state of their own hearts. No people have as deep and keen a sense of sin as they. Having become intimate with divine and human perfection, the abyss of selfishness in their natures, were it not for the irresistible grace of God, would fill them with despair. Nor do they deceive themselves regarding society and regarding their race and nation. As they walk by the City Prison, they hear its awful defiance to Christ. Knowing the slum, they know to the full the fearful fight that lies ahead. They know the horror of war wherein so-called Christian nations glorify force and even gild it with apparent religion. They know the pitilessness of power which crushes the weak in order to increase the strength of the strong. They know the lust which makes the world of men a hideous place for an innocent girl to walk in. They shut their eyes to nothing. And yet they believe in the reign of love and righteousness and right. God helping them, they can believe in nothing else.

Jesus, accepted as the Saviour from sin, as the Interpreter of life, forces His followers to put to themselves the decisive question — Do you believe, truly and with your whole heart, in the reign of God on earth? They may temporarily obscure that question. For a while the Christian may accept a monasticized Christianity as the equivalent for the Christianity of Christ. The immortality of the soul, detached from a connection with a larger conception and conviction, may monopolize consciousness. But, sooner or later, Christ and His Word bring Christianity back to its bearings. Then His question comes home — Do you believe in the Kingdom of God? Is it more than a bare conception which, from time to time, visits your brain? Is it a passion possessing your heart? Is it a mighty conviction gripping and guiding your will? If it is not all that, it is at best a halting, a crippled Christianity.

What, then, is faith? It is the radiant answer to that decisive question proposed to the conscience of man by God in Christ. The ecclesiastical usage of the word "faith" has sorely obscured its true perspective.

The credal conception of belief, which should always put this larger conception of faith in the light, has often darkened it. The Infallible Church has substituted belief in herself for belief in the Kingdom of God, and thus has side-tracked the final question. The vision of Heaven has sometimes distracted the Christian's attention from the moral end of history. Thinking about Jesus does not necessarily mean thinking with Jesus. Indeed, one can do a great deal of the former kind of thinking while doing very little of the latter. But when we think with Jesus, when we permit Him to redeem our reason, there is just one track for thought to follow. We start where He started. We take the Old Testament as the book of the nation. With our nation we grow up into a sovereign hope. We look for the reign of God on earth, for right triumphant over wrong, for justice victorious over brute force, for the predominance of mercy and truth. Our eyes strain to see the dawn of the world's peace. We come to Christ with our great hope. Day by day our heart sickens, as we know our own sin and the world's indifference. We come to Christ to be saved.

His work and mind and person bring us, through the sacramental power of a perfect humanity, into the saving presence of the Deity. Through Him God's full being and reality invade history and appeal to the conscience. The Christian is beset by snobberies innumerable, by tyrannies immeasurable, by servility unspeakable. The forces that conspire to make true fellowship impossible throng about him. But the Captain of Salvation makes him strong. By the power of His life, Jesus brings the Kingdom of God down out of the clouds. He dedicates man to the supreme hope. So when He puts the final question to the conscience — Do you believe in the reign of God on earth? the Christian answers, Yes, with all my heart. Christ makes that question inevitable. He also makes an affirmative answer to it necessary. And so He becomes our Saviour, delivering us from the vanities that debase us and the fears that unman us.

Christ and His Word are a Word from God that penetrates to the depths of our being, and so perfects religion. For the function of religion is to give man ease of heart concerning his connection with the unseen

world and the future lying before him. Christianity fulfils all religion by giving us a radiant confidence regarding the moral quality and end of history. Put in another way, this means that our religion gives us a saving certainty regarding the possibility of perfect fellowship. Saving certainty is of many kinds. There is the saving certainty of the wrestler when, after a terrific strain, his breath comes to him again and he faces his adversary with a clear eye and steady nerves. There is the saving certainty of the statesman when some great corporate action, brought to a stand for a while by hostile forces, rallies the energies of the best elements of the commonwealth, and embodies itself in Law. And there is the supreme form of certitude, the saving certainty of the Christian when, fully aware of the deadly power of sin and worldliness, he feels the being and will of the living God well up within his soul. He feels and knows that perfect human fellowship is possible. The realities of friendship and the family, the soundest and sweetest elements of life, find here their goal and consummation.

The reach and scope of action is in proportion to

the strength and depth of certainty. There is a Hamlet in us all. The ideal in us, confronting a mass of human nature and motive too vast to be moralized, loses hope. Our supreme enterprise loses the name of action. But God through Christ gives us heart and hope. Out of our saving certainty a supreme action springs; an action into which the man of faith puts his whole nature, head and heart, reason and emotion; an action through which man, by divine grace and power, creates himself, and by one supreme deed constantly renewed foreordains the course of his after life, so that all his actions take from this action both form and color.

Faith in the Kingdom of God, in human fellowship, is the sovereign power of will. The saving purpose of the followers of Jesus grips the world with a hold that cannot be shaken off. Mountains stand in the way. But in the Christian consciousness is found a moral force that can remove them.

CHAPTER V

LAW THE FINAL PROBLEM OF LIFE

CHRISTIANITY is the final form of monotheism. Its essence is a unitary view of nature and destiny, rendered convincing by a Supreme Person, the Christ. The meaning of personality is here seen in its highest form. For it is the part of personality to unify experience, to bring the seen and the unseen fields of reality into intimate relation with one another. When the world seems to have played us false, when the fair humanities of our early experience have fallen a prey to doubt and disillusionment, it is the loving and holy life of a prophet or a friend that gives us back our trust in the frame and constitution of things, our belief that life is livable. Personality, in one form or another, is the source and spring of all our sacraments. And the significance of a sacrament is found in the fact that the

innermost forces and meanings of the universe take to themselves the things of sense as a visual language, the medium of revelation, and through that medium speak home to us, forcing upon us the conviction that the world is one, and that what is dearest to our hearts is deepest and most enduring in the Universe. The rose in bloom makes time the child of eternity. The smile and hand-clasp of a friend deliver life from its fractions and make it whole.

The Person of Christ is the source and spring of the Christian's sacraments. Through His mind and work the unity of God pierces to the centre of our consciousness, so that our experience is unified, becoming a consistent and purposive whole. Thus we are saved from dualism, from the belief that splits the universe in two. It does not take any very wide knowledge of religious history to prove that dualism, sometimes in a severe and sometimes in a mild form, is the normal faith of mankind. The depth of its root, the strength of its appeal, are clearly seen in the part it has played in the history of our Christianity itself. But the consistent Christian view is a thoroughgoing

monotheism. The Divine Unity, embodied in Christ, visualized by Christ, revealed by Christ,— that is the marrow of our creed. Our faith is not a mere intellectual monotheism. If it were that, it might be possible to confine it to our heads. It might be nothing better than a noble abstraction, a splendid ghost having power enough to give bad dreams to worldly people, yet not able to bring the creative and invigorating unity of God to bear upon the entire mass of human life and motive. But Christian monotheism does just that thing. The Person of Christ, rooted deep in history and triumphantly claiming the right of way in the field of morality, does for conscience what the noble portrait of some individual belonging to a past age does for our culture. The portrait overcomes time and space, and makes the individual who died, say three hundred years ago, a living contemporary. Even so the Christ overcomes time and space and all the disunifying forces of the world. The unity of God and the unity of life become for those who love and serve Jesus a solid conviction, a present and potent fact, an irresistible moralizing force.

Monotheism, as a living faith, involves a high degree of mental concentration. Polytheism dissipates and scatters human attention. But Monotheism concentrates it. Emerson has somewhere said that concentration is the source of all the virtues. It is a great saying. Concentrated attention to some considerable end is the only possible source of real virtue as distinguished from conventional morality. Now Monotheism in every one of its forms is a superior kind of concentration. The perfect Monotheism is the supreme form of concentration. The object upon which attention is fixed and riveted is the moral meaning and end of history, visualized as the Kingdom of God and realized with increasing and contagious power in human fellowship. We repeat, then, that the marrow of the Christian's view of things is a conception of the divine unity which makes it as intimate with life as the power of gravity is intimate with our mother earth.

Once more, we must take pains to clear our heads. The history of western civilization has given us, by means of the distinction between Church and State,

a classification of our largest moral values under two distinct and practically separate heads, Righteousness and Justice. When the Catholic Church established herself, without the help of and even in mortal opposition to the heathen state, and when soon after she proceeded to monasticize herself, sending her picked men and women apart from the world to seek perfection through the ascetic life, the word "righteousness" became largely identified with the moral perfection of the single soul. The great word "justice," necessarily identified with the State, was severely wounded. Not mortally wounded, because the Christian consciousness has not wandered and cannot wander so far from Christ as to forget its responsibility for the moral conduct of the world at large. But when Christianity was monasticized, the word "justice" was deeply wounded. The historical study of the Scriptures makes it certain, beyond all question, that where we have two terms to cover the field of morality, the Word of God has but one. If we would fully translate the Beatitude, we must say, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness and justice, for they shall be

filled." If we would think with Jesus as well as think about Him, if we would take our logic of life from the Word of God, we must steadily conceive our religion as aiming at the moral end and issue of history. We are people of one Book, and that Book the Bible. We are men and women dominated by a single thought, and that thought the reign of Christ on earth. Our master-virtue, from which all other virtues take their tone and temper, is a high and steady and sustained attention to the Kingdom of God.

This, then, is the way in which we do our thinking. We stand confronting an immense need and task. It is nothing less than the creation of a true society and fellowship. We are forced to speak of it as our need, because in no other way can we hope to deeply know God and ourselves, because in no other way can we be saved. Revelation and need are inseparable. It is our glorifying wants that unlock the storehouse of reality and truth. The secrets of life are not disclosed to those who day-dream and drift. The depth of revelation is porportioned to the intensity of conscious need, and the will and purpose which spring

from the need. Now our reading of the Bible is on the surface until we realize that the fundamental human need and desire, to which God opens His being and resources, is a true society. But a fundamental need which is met and satisfied by divine revelation necessarily results in a task. The depth of the need and the greatness of the revelation are proportional. Therefore, as Christians, people who take Jesus as their interpreter and guide, an immense task confronts us. Our Lord has put us under bonds to God and Man to create the true society and fellowship.

From this standing-ground it should be easy to see that the problem of Law is our final problem. At any rate, whether it is easy or hard, see it we must, and, once seen, keep it steadily before our mind's eye, if we would keep our thinking straight and clear. There are some elements in our situation that may obscure this point. In Antiquity, in Israel, and no less in Greece and Rome, it was easily seen and constantly kept in view. Indeed, no other view was possible. Church and State were a single organism.

The State was small. The danger besetting it was close at hand. Life was relatively simple. But as for ourselves, we live under widely different conditions. With us moderns, Church and State are separate, sometimes hostile organisms. The modern State is an immense affair. It is easy, even for excellent people, to take their obligations as citizens very lightly. Within the vast circle of the nation's being many specialties of culture are pursued, each with an absorbing attention and devotion. If a great war, imperilling the existence of the nation, sounds the call to arms, all folk of true mettle quickly realize that the well-being of the nation, the sanctity of its Law, is the supreme object of existence. They take Lowell's words as their own and say —

"What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!"

But in the times of peace, crowded with diversified interests of body and mind and soul, it is not at all

difficult for considerable classes of good people to act as if culture or science or art were the main end, whereas all such things are parts of that higher life which Law alone can make possible.

Again, the Law itself, thanks to the way it is recorded and administered, may becloud us and get in between us and the main point. In the days of Homer and the Prophets, the Law was a living thing, having its seat in the memories of living men. Natural and a matter of course was it, therefore, for Heraclitus to say — "Fight for the laws, for they are your city's walls." But in our case the laws are recorded in the artificial memory of books. And besides, we have a large body of dead laws, cumbering the statute-books, but incapable of being enforced, so that the multitude of laws obscures or covers over the majesty of the Law.

Finally, chief amongst the facts and forces which becloud the main issue, is religion itself. Christians have lived for nineteen centuries under a frame of government in which Church and State are distinct. It has become almost a matter of course to view the

Christian religion as concerned with higher interests than those of the State, even the interests of the soul. But our religion is so far from being superior to the question of Law that the final reason for its superiority to other religions is found in the fact that it so grounds the conception of Law that the highest form of society becomes possible. Let us, then, keep our minds bent upon our task, the task which the revelation of the living God sets in clear light. The man redeemed by Christ is the creator of good society. And his final problem is Law.

Law varies according to the matter in hand. Hence result shifting conceptions and ambiguous statements. But beginning with the laws of matter we have an ascending series. The law that binds together the members of a holy family is a different thing from the law of gravitation that draws masses of matter toward each other. The law of love and friendship that makes one will out of two wills, rendering each individual more individual by reason of his intimate union with the other, is a different thing from the law that mixes oxygen and hydrogen to make water.

The conception of law must adapt itself to the material it handles. But the final statement is something like this. Law is a corporate will composed of interlocking personal wills. Each one of these personal wills is bent and set upon creating and maintaining good society. Not the society that calls itself good, which is made up as a rule of our most pretentious and least useful citizens, but the society that loves goodness and seeks the common good.

The Law of the State, viewed in its existing condition, answers very poorly to that conception. If the present condition of things were the whole or even the chief part of our heritage, as honest folk we would condemn ourselves to bankruptcy. We would make it our main business to build monasteries and nunneries and monastic churches, persuading folk less clear-sighted than we to support them. The State as we see it is far removed from the ideal. We can kill a man because he has killed a fellow-man. But we cannot make a man of him. We shut up our criminals in States' Prisons and thereby, for the most part, conduct universities of crime. The City Prison,

by which we pass sometimes on our way to church, hurls a stubborn and ferocious defiance at Law and order and the common good. We do not have to scratch civilized man very deeply to find the brute. Our ethics fall a prey to industrial competition. Our religion constantly blends its enthusiasms with the passion of war.

But the State at its worst has in its memory the great ideal of justice shaped long ago by Roman lawyers and judges. "Justice is the steady purpose on the part of the State to see to it that every man has all that is his." The State at its best administers that ideal. Grant that the administration is rough and approximate. Still, the ground gained is a splendid strategic position from which we may advance into the future.

And then, to give us heart and hope, there are innumerable places in what we call the private life where the ideal of Law is fully or very largely realized. Friendships, which make no stir but which fulfil the law of life, are everywhere. The family in numberless cases realizes the conception of Law as a corporate will

including and insuring the wills of all its members. Within the pale of friendship and the family, not on the field of battle and not in the stress of competition, we think straight regarding the meanings and values of life. In these places the true Law of life has so far made for itself a body and taken form, that our higher thinking has the prestige of achievement to spur it on. In these tracts of deep living and vital thinking we standardize our compass. Here the innermost reality of things comes to light. Here Law publishes itself with an authority from which there is no appeal.

The Law of friendship and the Law of the family, the ideal of justice dimly visioned by the State—they all stretch out their hands in love of the Kingdom of God. The full and clear logic of Law is fulfilled in Christ. Each follower of Jesus, like his Master, brings the Kingdom of God down out of the clouds. By realizing the ideals of neighborliness and fellowship, he realizes the reign of God on earth.

The nature of Law in its highest sense now comes into clear light. There is a law of nature which, like

the cannon-ball, goes straight at its mark, crushing what it reaches. But the higher Law moves in a different way. It is administered by every true teacher, who makes superior knowledge and experience the tireless servitor of his pupil's mind. It is administered by every true father and mother, who devote their whole strength to clearing and guarding a space where their children may find and be themselves. We know how grievous is the tyranny of teaching. And we know that there is no tyranny like the tyranny of false motherhood and fatherhood. But the true teacher, through reverence for the younger mind, earns the right to think inside it and so inspires and expands it. The true father enters into the joy of the deepest comradeship that earth can know.

Wherever there is good society, Law and freedom become correlative terms. Every member of good society knows that to take away a man's freedom is to take away half his manhood, to make solid morality impossible. "Zeus takes from a man full half his character when the day of servitude overtakes him." And he also knows that no freeman can, with safety

and security for his own individuality, rule and dominate another human being. Nothing is so blinding as sheer supremacy. The freeman lives to enfranchise other men. He cannot enter upon his own heritage, the serene self-knowledge and the stanch self-mastery of the personal life, unless he becomes an interpreter of life for all his neighbors.

In order to keep our attention fixed upon the main point, we repeat our definition. Law is the corporate will into which individuals, in proportion to their individuality, build their several wills. Through that corporate will moral form and moral value are given to the mass of human experience. The corporate will with the corporate need from which it springs is the place where the living God reveals Himself. Revelation is a universal process, the Bible having no monopoly of it. It goes on wherever men and women of mettle and breeding devote themselves to high common ends. The Bible is a book of witness to the nature and the logic of revelation. It is the inspired body of straight thinking upon the final question. Man's deepest need is society and fellowship. In the depth

of that need God reveals Himself as the builder of good society. God as an abstraction is outside the most vital interests of man. No matter how we seek to glorify Him by raising His metaphysical attributes to the highest power of omnipotence and omniscience, we do not make Him the actual lord and master of men. Not until He reveals Himself to us when we are strained to the uttermost by our task, does He master us. Then He makes His will the power within our wills to the end that our wills may find themselves within His will. God is no abstraction. He is the sovereign personal force. His personality is the refuge and strength of all those who would fain live the personal life. We respect ourselves because we are God's servants, devoting our being as He devotes His to the supreme task. There is one law for the divine and the human life. We accept the Master's words as a revelation of God and an interpretation of man. Blessed are the peacemakers, because, being like God, God shall esteem them as His children.

God's will is the spring of living Law. It is our authority, high above our wills and yet within them.

The divine restraint and freedom are the foundation on which the Christian builds his hope and confidence. It is through the restraint of the superior power that the dependent will finds within the superior will its safeguard and shield. Through freedom the superior will lives and labors within the dependent will, giving it sap and growth. The self-revelation of the stronger is the means whereby the weaker inherits self-mastery and self-enjoyment. This is the dominant fact, the central luminous point, in the Christian's view of his world. Restraint and freedom, indivisibly one, give to the law its penetrating power. God carries the full weight of His desires and will to the very depth of the redeemed man's being. And we, redeemed, fulfil ourselves by living the redeeming life. Like God, we assert our freedom through restraint. So does the divine will through us become an irresistible authority, a Law with penetrating power.

CHAPTER VI

THE MYSTERY OF PLEASURE

THE substance of Christianity is faith in goodness. The pith of the Christian's goodness is the good will. His faith in God is a high and intense action. His will, at home within the divine will, is, like the divine will, creative. He takes life in its unity. Towards the Master of Life his attitude is a blending of intimacy and awe. To the Knight in the "Faerie Queene" the ideal woman he serves is his "dear Dreade." So to the Christian the love of God and the fear of Him are indissolubly blended.

> "For he who knows not how to love,
> Still less knows how to fear."

His attitude toward the Master of Life determines his attitude toward life itself. The will in him, being creative and a part of the power through which God

publishes His holy will, has a tireless energy and a resistless penetrating power. As he goes deep into life he finds himself surrounded and beset with mystery. The case stands with him as with the scientific stuent of our time. The working reason of science, by close and unflagging attention, becomes intimate with some small section of the Universe. Then straightway the immeasurable sweep of the Universe sets upon and invades the mind, just as a great tide sets into a little cove, filling it brim full with the consciousness of kinship to the illimitable deep. Even so the redeemed mind and will, going far into life, ceaselessly attentive to its meanings, eagerly interested in its unfolding, is set upon and invaded by the mystery of human destiny. The redeemed will deals with life as a whole and finds it infinite.

It is a matter of universal experience that the consciousness of meaning in things is in proportion to the sense of Law in things. The man of mere impulse and impression flits from sensation to sensation, as the bee flits from flower to flower. He can have no large consciousness of the meaning of nature because

he has no real conception of Law. But the man of science, for whom the Universe is a majestic organism of Law, finds unfathomed depths of meaning in the lowliest forms of life. Now, inasmuch as the final problem is Law and inasmuch as the Christian, when he outgrows childish things, is in a supreme sense the man of Law, conceiving it to be his task to bring all human experience within the moral order, it naturally follows that, the riper the life of the Christian becomes, the more is it surrounded and pervaded with mystery.

Meaning and mystery are in direct proportion. There is no true mystery for those who live on the surface of things. And because there is no true mystery, there is likely to be a false mystery, the thrill of a ghost story, an artificial miracle, some superstition disguised as piety. But for those who penetrate into the interior meanings of life, mystery is on all sides. Or rather, to put it in a better way, mystery is the heart and soul of meaning.

We must again clear our minds. We inherit a conception of mystery which will not help us to make

the right approach to the Atonement. For it conceives of mystery as a truth that is above the reach of reason. When, however, we have firmly grasped the unity of Christian thought, we see that this conception belongs to a body of concepts which, if we would keep in our hands the keys of Revelation, we cannot accept. It is part and parcel of the view which puts the monastic mystic in the place of the Christian Prophet, the Infallible Church in the place of the belief in the Kingdom of God. But to the Christian consciousness as the New Testament records and attests it, faith is the inner action of the whole man. Before he is redeemed, all divine things are beyond his reach. But when he is redeemed, he has the mind of Christ. "All things are his, because he is Christ's, and Christ is God's." Everything is above his unaided reason, that is to say, above the reason that is not inspired by the living God. But when he learns Christ, God puts the world in his heart. He can know nothing unless it be given him from above. But from above cometh light and illumination, flooding his entire being with meanings that carry with them the promise

of deeper meanings. Revelation and reason cease to be terms denoting distinct and separate regions of experience. A distinguished scientist once said, when about to perform an experiment in the presence of his class, "Now let us ask God a question." Experience is unified by life in God. Revelation and reason describe two aspects of a single and indivisible body of experience. Faith includes reason, and reason exercises its function in a world whose possibility of unity rests on the Unity of God.

From another point of view, the mystery which surrounds and informs the Christian's experience is the result of the relation between purpose and life. In childhood the world of mystery and the world of consciousness are a single world. The heavenly game of make-believe, so becoming to the child, so unseemly in the mature, is a matter of course. But the unities of childhood break up under increasing pressure. Specialization takes the place of the child's universalism. The specializations, as a rule, become hard and narrow. On the one side stands common sense, as definite and as finite as a nail-hole in a board.

On the other side stands mystery, as remote as heaven. Some tragic experience, the death of one's dearest, may for an hour or so weld them into a single world. But, for the most part, between common sense and mystery a great gulf is fixed. When, however, we have found ourselves in Christ, when we have taken the Kingdom of God for our fixed end and aim, that sovereign and controlling purpose makes us both the masters and the servants of life. Purpose takes in life. Life, while infinitely larger than purpose, steadily offers itself to purpose. So the Christian will, its metal being highly tempered, penetrates life and finds itself enfolded in mystery. Redemption is the final and inclusive purpose. Mystery is our highest attainment, the privilege, not of those who know least, but of those who know most; the prerogative, not of those who drift and dream, but of those who toil mightily in the service of eternal ends. It is the fundamental attribute of the illimitable and immeasurable life challenging, invading, and enlarging the mind and purpose of man.

If we carry our thoughts about pleasure into this

knowledge about God and man, it ceases to be a strain on speech to call pleasure a mystery. In our early years we are incapable of saying it honestly. We act upon the assumption that pain and sorrow and loss constitute the mystery of life. We assume that the presence of pain in our world calls for an explanation, that it puts God on the defensive. If our world contained nothing but pleasure, — so we instinctively argue, — it would be an entirely intelligible world, our faith would find no difficulties. But this is the logic of youth, the reasoning of those who inherit, not of those who create.

The truth is that pleasure, when we take deep soundings of it, is as mysterious as pain. The pleasures of childhood are clearly distinguished from the degrading pleasures of the deliberate pleasure-seeker. They are both the condition and the consequence of growth and action. The child makes as well as finds his world. And it is in the ceaseless intermingling of the two elements that the secret of childhood is found. Action and growth are the springs of childhood's pleasures.

The people who make pleasure a profession, and so lose the secret of pleasure, seek for pleasures that are largely passive. But passive pleasure, no matter what its motive and apparent source, is dissipating and degrading. Even the pleasures of religion, when they are nothing better than a riot of emotion, are a form of dissipation. Pure pleasure is the condition and the consequence of action and purpose.

And its reach is in proportion to action. Its history is a part of the history of action. The depth of its root is in keeping with the breadth and elevation of the ends to which men and women devote themselves. Pure pleasures, for the mature, are those into which goes a large amount of purposive energy. The daring swimmer and the fearless mountain-climber give to Nature quite as much as they take from her. The joy of those who make themselves free laborers in the service of the common weal, the joy of the teacher, the joys of the friend and the lover, — in all these highest forms of pleasure the proportion of action and purpose is very large. And in the same degree they become infinite in their reach. The joys

of self soon find their limits. But the mental pleasure of the disinterested student of Nature is as deep as the Universe. The joys of friendship are illimitable. The happiness that our friend's happiness gives us cannot be measured and is self-renewing.

In the building of the family the quality and the end of pure pleasure disclose themselves with peculiar clearness. A man and a woman fall in love. Emotional sexual passion draws them together. But falling in love is only the beginning. Those who would build a holy family must climb. To become worthy of each other they must outgrow and transcend themselves. The family is the proving-ground of freedom. Nowhere can tyranny be so terrible. The most destructive forms of egotism, the tyrannies of lust and temper, here manifest themselves. But the family, in its conception and ideal, is the nursery of freedom. The man and the woman, whose spirits and whose bodies found it, by mutual reverence and restraint build their individual wills and purposes into a corporate will. It is the highest privilege of each to safeguard the rights of the other. And through their

common unstinted devotion to their children they exalt themselves, each crowning the other.

From the family flow the deepest springs of pleasure. Within its precincts infinite values abound. Love obliterates the distinction between little things and great things. To the lover the ribbon or the glove his dear one has worn is above price. The creative love that builds the holy family has the same transfiguring power. The little and the great are caught up together into the mystery of the creative life.

The training schools of friendship and the family find their goal and consummation in the building of good society, in the founding of the Kingdom of God. For here creative action is at its height. There is a widespread but vicious conception of salvation which makes man's part in salvation a passive one. On the contrary, our relation to God is the field of most intense action. It is true that, in the saving of the soul, in the creation of personality, God does all. But He does nothing unless through us. Our relation to Him is not passive. It is the intensest receptivity. Now receptivity means appreciation. And appreciation

necessitates action. The appreciation of noble things, a great picture or a great book for example, puts our best faculties and powers on the stretch. The enjoyment of classical literature has to be earned by severe labor, while the beauty and majesty of human character are given only to those who toil mightily to make themselves worthy. Even so with salvation. We are saved when God reveals Himself in our hearts as the living God, the creative Good. Salvation involves the highest form of appreciation and admiration. Awe of God's being and will and admiration of His majesty and beauty fill our souls with ecstasy and peace. Our being is stirred to its depths. The spirit in us is enkindled to intensest action. And our wills lay hold on life with a masterful grip.

Like God, we live the creative life. We sum up our joys in the joy of the Lord. Surrendering ourselves to the Unity of God, we find within our own being the source of unity and coherence, of meaning and value in experience. The cheap mysteries of worldliness — we outgrow them and leave them behind. The seat of mystery is in our hearts. Our faith in God and man

is our supreme action. Out of a great-hearted faith issues an eager interest in human affairs, a tireless attention to human needs and problems, a penetrating purpose which all the forces of selfishness and inertia cannot resist. The wide world becomes our heritage. The mystery and meaning of things open to us day by day. With St. Paul, as an American poet has paraphrased him, we sing the praise of creative love —

"Had I not love, although my voice bade men and angels all rejoice with harmonies above, alas, it were in vain! Alas! but cymbal's sound of tinkling brass, and nought my gain, and nought my gain, had I not love!

"Though I were fain of mysteries and prophecies, and though I knew all secrecies of earth below and heaven above, and even although my faith doth prove mighty to move yon mountain's mass, it were in vain had I not love!

"And even although with glad desire my goods I give that starving men may take and live; though at the stake in flame of fire, I die for the Redeemer's name, and have not love, it were but shame!

"He, in whose mind the heavenly love its home doth make, will suffer long and still be kind for love's dear sake!

"Love vaunteth not, for in its heart no vanity or pride hath part.

"It moveth all to courtesy; it doth not seek its own; it is not angered easily; it loveth not iniquity; it loves the truth alone.

"All things it bears; it has all faith; all hopes it shares, nor doth it fail though railing tongues assail it.

"Love doth not fail, but prophecies and all the lore of tongues shall cease, and knowledge too shall be no more.

"In this brief day we know in part, but when we perfect are in heart, our partial knowledge will not last, but pass away.

"In infant's swaddling bands confined, I had the infant's tongue and mind, but the strong man is not beguiled by the weak fancies of the child!

"Still, still we see all things that pass, darkly as in a wizard's glass, but when we gain heaven's perfect grace we shall see all things face to face!

"For here below small is the part, I e'er can know of God's great All; but there on high before God's throne, there I — even I also — shall know as I am known!

"And now remains faith, hope, and love, these three, the greatest of God's train. And greatest of the three is love."

Devotion to the moral order gives us training in moral and spiritual taste. This training brings us pleasures that are both strong and subtle. Taste in other fields of experience opens to us the under meanings of beauty. Looking at a meadow in late summer, the blunt and untrained eye gets only the self-evident colors. The trained eye sees those under colors that give body and depth to the main color. So does severe training of the moral taste enrich us with the under meanings of life. We take the keenest delight in little things, knowing them to be the hiding-place of the infinite and the eternal. Putting our envies and jealousies under our feet, we find large pleasure in the good work of other men and women. High and sus-

tained action along personal lines of choice and endeavor fits us to appreciate and admire their work. Edwin Booth, by devotion to the actor's art, was enabled to say, "I count no man happy until he is able to rejoice over the success of his rival." And the people who have been redeemed by the Lord, through devotion to the Kingdom of God, have made the Beatitudes their own, and can say: —

"Happy are they who, conscious of a supreme task, are humble at heart, for to them belongs the key of Heaven.

"Happy they who grieve over the world's sin and shame, for God shall comfort them.

"Happy they who in the presence of God and man are lowly-minded, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Happy they who hunger and thirst after righteousness and justice, for God shall feed them full.

"Happy they who rise to great-hearted sympathy with others, for God's mercy and sympathy shall enfold them.

"Happy they in whom steady devotion to the su-

preme human end has given purity of heart, for they shall see God.

"Happy they who make glad the heart of man with the tidings of peace, for God will claim them and proclaim them as His children."

Our highest right is the right to joy. Without it we lose our right to ourselves. Without joy there can be no deep knowledge of self, no large self-mastery, no generous and resonant action. But our right to joy is not assured to us until we make the Kingdom of God our law and, sustained by a mighty faith in God and man, become creators of good. Then vicariousness in pleasure is quite as fundamental a truth as vicariousness in pain. Our last word about pleasure is — it is a mystery; it is one name for the redeemed life that is forever unfolding new meanings to us.

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERY OF PAIN

MYSTERY, as we have seen, is the outer aspect of meaning. The fuller life is of meaning, the more deeply does it enter into mystery. We have also seen that meaning and mystery are in proportion to purpose. Given a masterful and penetrating purpose that grips life hard and pierces it through with interpreting power, then mystery becomes the very heart of existence. It is but another name for the unity and immeasurableness of experience. Wave on wave it comes upon us out of the great deep. Now the Christian, being a person redeemed from vanity and fear, is possessed by the supreme purpose called the Kingdom of God, which is nothing less than God's proposal, made to us through Christ, to moralize human life as a whole. Christ has put us under bonds to realize the ideal of fellow-

ship. To pay our debt to Him, we must have a profound belief in man. Controlled by that belief, whenever we touch our neighbors, we touch infinite and eternal values. So the key-note of the Christian life is mystery, that is to say, we know the infinite just far enough to make it intimate and friendly. But the little we know must be constantly transcending itself, under peril of shrivelling into commercially valuable but spiritually noxious common sense.

The true criticism of life springs from faith in life. Every real critic of a thing must be a believer in it, Only through belief in it, through surrender of mind and will and attention to it, can he understand and interpret it. The commonest wayside weed will not unlock its secret unless the observer approaches it with eager interest and untiring attention. How much less the mystery of life! Belief in life is the unconditional requirement for criticism of life. The reasons for pessimism are ample, if we choose to look for them. Under certain conditions pessimism is Bottom's part in the play. Anybody can do it extempore. But the followers of Jesus are people of

heroic will. They have been brought into quickening touch with the supreme hope. Human life in its full scope acquires thereby an infinite value. We face life with our eyes open. We know full well the sin and weakness of our own hearts, the wickedness and brutality of our world. But Christ hath dedicated us to a sovereign hope and hopefulness. So, facing life, we will not let the vision of Heaven distract our attention from the Kingdom of God. We see Heaven shining, not above life, but through life.

The elements of life are pleasure and pain. The business of life consists in a wise and masterful handling of its pleasures and its pains. Pleasure, we know, becomes a mystery to men and women who have been redeemed. We drink of God's pleasures as out of a river, and every pleasure is a key to the deeper knowledge of God, a more intimate fellowship with man. But while pleasure, deeply understood, is quite as mysterious as pain, owing to our natural point of view in earlier years, pain is our most difficult problem. We speak of the mystery of pain with an emphasis

we find it difficult to equal when we speak of the mystery of pleasure.

At the outset it is forced on our attention that faith itself creates some difficult problems and so becomes responsible for some acute mental pains. If we could let our attention slide off into the dualist's interpretation of the world, a large part of our difficulties would fall away at once. For we should then have a force independent of God and dividing the field of reality with Him. To this independent force or being we could ascribe all evil, leaving God free to claim for Himself the good alone. No matter how great a burden of suffering and sorrow we might have to bear at times, our minds would be free from the torture of doubts disputing God's wisdom and impugning His goodness. Or suppose that, while believing in the unity of the Universe and in the divine unity underlying and upholding it, we were not troubled by a cultivated conscience. Suppose that our crowning and critical faculty were a pure contemplative or scientific reason. We could still pay our moral debts with a fair degree of ease. For we should take God

and the world together as constituting a vast organism of force whose irresistible push and thrust make everything that happens right. But when we have accepted the existence of a personal holy and loving God, the sustainer and guardian of a moral order, our faith itself gives birth to immense difficulties. We are forced to judge ourselves and the order of things in which we exist in the light of the perfect ideal. How can God carry His case before conscience? The incredible mass of pain and evil in this world — how can we face it frankly and still adore Him?

Use the idea of evolution as we will, while it greatly alleviates our difficulties, it cannot remove them. The horror of sin in our hearts remains. The more nearly we approach the ideal, the more keenly are we tortured by our failure to reach it. We undergo the keenest form of that pain which intimacy with the perfect inevitably brings. The scholar subjects himself to mental torture over a minute question. The lover of literary beauty agonizes over the choice of a word. An artist slays himself because the work of his hand is so far below the vision of his mind. The

Christian's consciousness of sin, because he is intimate with the perfect good, raises this form of pain to its highest power. Yet he would not, if the whole world were offered him, cast in his lot with the lovers of ease who avoid the cross and cast their souls away.

The hideous mass of sin and pain in our nation and race cannot be made tolerable by the philosophy of evolution unless we carry our philosophy far away from politics and trade and the slums into some private pleasure-house of ease. As honest folk, we must admit that our Christianity creates difficulties which a lower level of belief avoids. And these difficulties pierce us through with pain.

But the creative will and purpose in us which cause the difficulties give us ennobling patience in handling them. No matter how severe the difficulties at times become, there is unity in them. Now as long as a view and interpretation of things unifies our experience, our problems included, we have the wherewithal of noble living. If our unifying view brings difficulties to light, we are to take them as a part of the whole. Problems are as necessary as the truth. Indeed,

there is no vital truth without problems. Unity in difficulties is a part of saving truth. It is the difficulties that have no unity in them, and so lack all promise of ultimate values, which dissipate our will and so unman us. The Christian view and purpose that create these difficulties enable us to accept the pains they impose upon us as an organic part of the redemptive life. The savage, having no conception of the unity of nature, is free from piercing mental problems. The man of science, dominated by that conception, is sometimes whipped and scourged by problems. But his problems are his heritage. The great conception that creates them dowers them with the promise of meaning. Even so, the very difficulties of our faith contain the promise of intimate and interior knowledge of life. Pain, no matter what its mass, is a true mystery, because apart from it the deepest meanings of life stubbornly refuse to unlock their doors.

It is with the study of pain as with the study of pleasure. The key is action. The higher the reach of our pleasures, the larger our personal share in their

making. And when pleasure attains its noblest and most enduring levels, the element of action is at its highest power. The same rule holds good of our pains.

Take the world's pain in the mass. Can we make it intelligible? When it strikes those we love, is it morally bearable? Bear it physically we must. But can we reconcile ourselves to it as part of a divine plan and scheme? Our own pain, if we have good mettle in us, we can bear in silence lest we increase the world's burden. But the pain and sorrow that cause the sword to go through the heart of a friend — can we make them any part of a holy and unwasteful plan?

The strength to wait even when we cannot understand comes to us when, turning from the pain toward which we stand passive and which puts a veto upon action, we consider the pain that is a vital and necessary part of high and resonant action.

The moral element in pain is clearly seen when we look upon our life in time and space as a training-school for the spirit. There is a time-element in

goodness which increases with the range and reach of action. The higher the end toward which the spirit in us strains, the more distant it becomes. The pain of suspense is increased in the same measure. Yet the suspense is essential to the goodness of the action. Human goodness, freed from the pains of suspense, would be a matter of feeling and emotion alone, a succession of impressions and without organizing power. Space joins with time to make us free spirits. Separation from those we love helps us to know whether we can see the unseen or not. To little children even a mother long absent is as good as non-existent. To mature souls the absent are spiritually and really present. The pain and ache of separation purify our passions, lifting us above the ebb and flow of sensuous emotion. In the training-school of time and space the mind, to use Plato's words, becomes the place of the body. And the kind of pain in which mind and will freely play a part, thus acting as a leaven, is the necessary means to that great end.

Another form of this selfsame pain is imposed

upon us by that tragic disproportion between our plan of work and our time for work, which the passing years bring in their train. The better and the larger the work one longs to do, the wider and the deeper yawns the gulf between desire and deed. But we freely make the pain our personal possession and so transform its tragic quality. For in no other way can the infinitude of truth be brought home to us. Our limitations of time and strength become the bonds of ennobling fellowship and the possibilities of revelation. By their means we may become, if we will, lowly-minded and heroic citizens in the commonwealth of man. And through them, if we go deep enough into them, God reveals Himself with irresistible force and appeal.

Confusion of mind arises from our everyday thought regarding vicarious pain. We are apt to speak of it as if it were in a class by itself and as if it gave us the one helpful analogy to the Atonement. For the sake of clearness and consistency we had better drop the word "vicarious" altogether, or else give it a wider application. What is called vicarious pain is an inte-

gral element of the corporate life. Whenever men and women live as persons, that is, whenever they claim the lives and souls of other people as their workshop and playground, vicarious pain is as inevitable as the tides. In the degree to which we build our wills into a corporate will, finding and fulfilling our being in a common need and good, does pain come to us through the existence and the actions of others. If we are passive toward it, it becomes a part of the world's pain which, looked at in the mass, seems wasteful and unintelligible. It increases "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world." But if we freely accept it as the price we pay for our high privilege of living and finding our being in others, then the pain becomes intelligible pain. It is redemptive, and justifies itself in increments of character. Vicarious pain, when we regard it in its relation to the corporate life, is seen to be a universal human quality.

In the building of the family vicarious pain is a law ceaselessly operative. He who has seen the transfigured face of a young mother, when the agony and the terror of birth pains are over and her child has

come safely to the light, has learned the secret of the family life at its best. It is built up on numberless self-denials, on ceaseless self-sacrifice. While the human atom — if there be such a thing — is exposed to wounds from one direction, the men and women who join their souls as well as their bodies to build the family are open to wounds from a dozen directions. When we enter deeply into the corporate life, two things happen to us. On the one hand, we accept the lives and fortunes and characters of other people as our responsibility. On the other hand, we become keenly sensitive to hurts. So in every way we are made more liable to pain. And our liability to pain is the noblest attribute of our humanity.

This is because in the family life the active element and quality that ennoble pain are carried to a great height. We act within others. The Epicurean had a fine saying, "My friend is my stage." A true member of a family finds his stage in the lives of those he loves. His chief calling is to play his part on that stage with freedom from self-consciousness, with earnestness and power. Hence he becomes possessed of

a manifold individuality. His liability to pain and his sensitiveness to pain increase together.

The redeemed life raises this active element in pain to the highest power. Devoting ourselves to the Kingdom of God, we turn its clear light on the sin and imperfection of our inner life. The least spot upon our spiritual honor, the least thing that lessens our serviceableness to Christ,—we feel it like a stain. Conscience kindles in us the fires of purgatory. And all these pains of the cross we gladly bear. For through them the dross and weakness of our mortal nature are removed. The world is crucified unto us and we unto the world. Our vanities and our fears are slain together. The will within us exalts itself through faith and so becomes a part of the eternal will that makes for the world's righteousness and right. We bear our pains with gladness.

As our Lord freely chose the cross that He might purge the hope of His nation from its vulgarity and its violence, so we, walking in His footsteps, freely and joyously choose the cross. For the joy that was set before Him, the joy coming to the founder of God's

Kingdom, He endured the cross and made light of its shame. We, devoting ourselves to His purpose and plan, make our hearts springs of hope and refreshment to our fellows. We make our wills the source of penetrating and cleansing Law. We rule over others by serving and interpreting them. The result is a growing body of redemptive pain.

The Christian law of life is expressed by St. Paul in words that seem to be a paradox, but are in truth the sober expression of ultimate experience. Each member of the blessed and saving society of Jesus will seek to bear his neighbors' burdens. At the same time he will seek to bear his own burden. And so the common and corporate hope of perfection inspires all to care for each and strengthens each to care for all. The roots of fellowship go deeper and deeper into human nature. And forth from the deep of human nature wells up the revelation of the living God.

Private pains and griefs pierce us through. But as Christ trains us, more and more it comes to be the case that our sorest griefs are griefs over the state of our nation and race. The Christian consciousness,

saved for the supreme hope, yet in closest touch with the world, is like the mother in our Lord's words, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." For out of Christian consciousness is born the confidence that makes a perfect fellowship possible. And such confidence may not be had apart from the pains of mental and moral suspense that test our faith whether it be of God, or whether it be of ourselves and owes its birth to the favor of genial temperament and kindly circumstance.

Pain is not an intrusive element in life. Death is not the great intruder. Our friends make life spacious by living, and by dying leaven life with an unseen reality which is the source and guarantee of abiding values. Living and dying, we eternize ourselves through the cross.

Even as the joys of life sum themselves up in the joy of the Lord, so the sorrows of life sum themselves up in our sorrow that the Kingdom of God, perfect

human fellowship, should be so far from us. Inevitably the joy and the pain are blended into a single emotion. Indeed, it is a fundamental law regarding all the deepest joys and pains, that they merge into one another. Hence the great Apostle, after he has sung his song of triumphant joy ending in "Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ," passes straight into the mood of grief and pain. "Brethren, my heart's desire for Israel is that they should be saved." The joy of those who break bread in the Kingdom of God is inseparable from redemptive pain. But joy, not pain, is the inclusive and controlling emotion.

We are not worthy to enjoy the beatific vision steadily. But sometimes it comes to us, that blessed mood in which the certainty of redemption possesses us. God's holy will our law! Our wills, knit together, the spring of the law of fellowship! As on a clear day one sees a far distant sea or mountain, so in this blessed mood we have vision of the city of God coming out of heaven and taking possession of the earth. Then with Paul we sing: "Who shall separate us

from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CHAPTER VIII

FORGIVENESS AND LAW

WE must keep our eyes fixed steadily on a single point, if, coming to the end of our study, we are to find the Atonement, as a process and action, inevitable both for God and man. The view of the Atonement which served our ancestors' needs leaves us cold. Its foundations were laid in the Middle Ages. God was thought of as being in His Heaven. Revelation was a closed process, and its records were in the keeping of an infallible Church. The work of the Church was to save souls. She was distinct and separate from the State. While she gave immense gifts to civilization and morality, the problem of Law was not her primary problem. The single soul was the unit of thought and feeling. The spiritually minded men and women, for the most part, were in the monastery and the

nunnery. The interests that go into the family and the commonwealth were looked upon as secondary. They were no part of primary reality, of the innermost core of life. Hence under the pressure of speculation and mysticism they readily gave ground. In the last analysis they did not enter into the idea of God and the conception of man.

Under these conditions the Atonement was thought of as a propitiation offered to God, to make good the injury done His majesty and honor by man's sin and self-centredness. The object of the Incarnation was to impart to the human actions and merits of the Saviour such transcendent value that He could bring the propitiation up to the level of the offence against God's infinite majesty. The propitiation being made, the divine forgiveness followed.

But there is a fatal criticism upon this view. If the divine forgiveness is conditioned on propitiation, then it ceases to be free forgiveness. It is not forgiveness in the full sense. If propitiation is first made, then forgiveness must follow as a matter of fair dealing. If God did not forgive, He would be unjust. God

does not, then, forgive freely. His forgiveness is earned. It is true that at bottom the Atonement is conceived as God's own action, since it is the Incarnation alone that gives value to the propitiation. Yet, when the last statement is made, the thought is unclear. The free creative action of God is overclouded and obscured.

The conditions under which we must think out our view of the Atonement, if we are again to have a view that will quicken our emotions and heighten our gratitude, are widely different. As we have seen, we must disregard the distinction between this world and the other world, taking life in its unity with the Divine Unity as the source of sanity and hope. Logical and consistent monotheism gives us a single and invisible universe within which we must find ourselves and wherein we must achieve self-knowledge and self-mastery. In like manner we have to neglect, for the time being, the distinction between Church and State. We make our start with the conviction that the ultimate problem is Law, the spring and confidence of a society aiming at righteousness and right. As Christians

we think from a centre. The centre is the Kingdom of God. That great conception is not an abstraction nor is it a mere picture, however vivid, of the things that shall come to pass on the Last Day. It is a present force. Indeed, it is the supreme moralizing force, giving form and color to our being and our motives. The Captain of our salvation has founded the Kingdom within our nature and in our midst. He has made fellowship the test of religion. In the deep of human fellowship, the innermost reality, mental and moral and spiritual, is found. And the last word about reality is the self-revelation of God. The Supreme Person reveals Himself in the hearts of redeemed persons and gives them the grace and power wherewith they stand up to their great task without flinching.

Here, then, we test our theories of truth. Here we standardize our weights and measures and values. Our unit of thought and feeling is the creative will in the breast of the Christian, the will that realizes the ideal of fellowship and sets up in the heart of man a Law whose authority and appeal cannot be withstood.

A living will that makes room within itself for other wills, safeguarding their individuality, insuring their growth and perfection, — that is the pith and marrow of real Law, whether human or divine.

Under these conditions we have to think of God as the sovereign will, having His seat and throne in the heart of man. God is in His Heaven. But the revelation by which we know Him is history. The heavenly-minded man is not to turn monk. He is to keep his station within the historical life of the nation and the race and hold up before it the inspiring and invigorating vision of perfect neighborliness. God is the creator of true society, — this is our deepest word about Him. And the people who are redeemed by Christ from vanity and fear give their desires and prayers and labors to the building up of a majestic corporate will and purpose, through which the living God reveals His mind and publishes His judgments.

This is our thinking-place. Here we take up our fixed position in hope of seeing the Atonement rooted in the nature of God and man. The problem of Law and the mystery of life force us into the fact and mystery

of corporate being and good as a final view of things. This is the proving-ground of all our thoughts about Law. Deep as is our debt to the scientist, we cannot take from him our regulative ideas on the subject. In the majesty of Natural Law we see the majesty of God. But the final conception must come from the deep of human nature and human need. Even the judge and the jurist cannot guide us to our goal. Our proving-ground is that tract and portion of our experience where good society actually exists and where fellowship as an ideal is under the spur of fellowship as a fact. In true friendship and in the holy family our final conception is given us.

Starting here, we can keep the controlling thought steadily in view. We must hold ourselves close to this, else our reasoning will lack coherence and cogency. In our time the clarity of Christian consciousness and reason is being threatened from two quarters. The first is the visible Universe coming upon us day by day with the force of a new discovery. Physical law knows nothing and can know nothing about forgiveness. Its whole meaning is expressed in the sequence

of cause and effect. Human actions, brought under the sway of natural laws, leave as little place for the divine forgiveness as the movements of the stars and the process of the tides. The second source of the confusion is India, whose religious views are beginning to exert an increasing influence. In the religious consciousness of India, so far as it is reflective and mature, forgiveness plays no considerable part. The final statement is a moral and spiritual law which has the same sort of inevitableness as the laws of the material Universe. The divine forgiveness has no place.

To hasty thinkers the testimony of science and the testimony of India seem to be one. But in fact, whatever may be the present opinions of scientists, science as a mood and attitude bears our minds toward a different conclusion. When the scientist outgrows the youthful habit of living on the earnings of his ancestors, when he makes himself directly responsible for the being and well-being of the free State, he must disclaim close kinship with India in matters of religion. Without the free State his science perishes.

When he opens his heart to religion, it must be a religion which makes personality its stake. He will turn, not to Buddha, but to Jesus.

No wonder that increasing numbers of people in our midst believe the view of India to be superior in point of moralizing power and value. So gross have been the perversions of Christian doctrine, so grievous the popular abuses of the doctrine of forgiveness, that honest folk may well be pardoned for regarding that doctrine as overclouding the majesty of the Moral Law, as weakening or disabling the penetrating power of conscience. But it is poor reasoning to judge a great body of thought by its abuses. The Christian view of reality stands or falls as a whole. Its stake and prize is the principle of individuality. And it so conceives of individuality that fellowship becomes the only medium through which individuality can express itself, the one language in which the people who are redeemed of the Lord can body forth their knowledge of the innermost truth and meaning of things. The Hindoo, as in Kipling's story of Purun Baghat, sacrifices without turning a hair what the

Christian is most concerned to preserve. The law of individuality carries our minds, with irresistible logic, into the conception of Law as a will that makes room in itself for other wills.

In the light of that reiterated conviction, what is the relation between forgiveness and Law? They are integral parts of a single conception. The final Law is the living will of God, and when men gainsay or deny God, when they trample the majesty of the Law under foot and dissipate the meaning and value of life, God must, under penalty of denying Himself, reassert the Law. And what is more, He must reassert it in the very place where it was broken, namely, the consciousness and conscience of the offender. The God and Father of Jesus Christ could never be content to thunder the sinner down. He will not, by the exercise of irresistible power, hurl the sinner headlong into Hell. Hell, if that be all there is to it, is a confession of moral inability and bankruptcy on God's part, just as the old-fashioned State's prison is a confession of bankruptcy on the part of the free State. God forgives the sinner. By the sweetness

and the strength of His grace He keeps His foothold within the will of the offender. And so the sinner, awakening to the dread and terror of his sin, finds his will still enclosed by the divine will. Thus God saves the man by making the Moral Law the very pith of the man's own will. The divine judgments on man are freely accepted by men, and gain the edge and point of judgments passed by men upon themselves. Man kindles his own judgment fires. It is through forgiveness that the Law penetrates and dominates the inmost being of free men.

If God cannot do as much as this, He can do less than we. For we, when the sweetness and sanctity of intimate fellowship have become the one real thing to us, insist as on a matter of life and death upon our right to continue to live our lives within those who grieve us by their absent-mindedness touching essential things and who deeply wound us by their infidelity to our common ideals. Let this right go, and we lose ourselves. We go through life like a bird with a wounded wing. We must forgive or deny ourselves, and in denying ourselves deny the ideal of fellowship.

The same necessity controls the divine and the human nature. The Law includes forgiveness as its method of administration.

Forgiveness does not slacken the Law; when the Law is recognized as the higher will within the lower will, this view rather gives it grip and hold upon the springs of character. This conception of the Law gives unity to all the commandments, renders morality a living body, and makes sin terrible. It is from this point of view that St. James writes when he says, "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." For the Law as he conceives it is the living will of God. God's will is not a moral code, but a personal presence in man's heart. When a man knows God, his relations to God are one. Touch one part and you touch all. There are no fractions in friendship. If I sin against my friend in a single detail of conduct, think a single ungenerous thought, or permit myself to descend for a moment into indifference and neglect, the entire relation between my friend and myself suffers. Sin is not concerned with details of conduct, but with the bent

and bias of the will. So, if a man sin in a single detail, he has broken the entire Law. The man who thinks an unclean thought about one woman defiles all womanhood in his heart. One lie soils and muddies the whole relationship between two persons, unsettles the foundations of social being. The Moral Law is a unity. Every sin is a sin against the whole Law, when Law is received as the expression of a living will.

So alone is the hideousness and horror of sin put in clear light. Forgiveness does not belittle it, but magnifies it. The will of God faces sin. What is to be God's attitude? How shall He bear Himself toward it? That will in us which God hath made in His likeness gives us the answer. For when our friends sin against us, we know there is but one thing for us to do. Through forgiveness we must maintain in the heart of the offender the ideal he has injured. Not to forgive were to add to the breach of the Law a still more fatal breach. If the innocent party refuses to forgive, what has he done? thrown up the fight for human perfection because of his own wounds. With-

out forgiveness the Moral Law, when recognized as the relation between personal beings, denies itself.

Forgiveness is the self-defence of the Law under attack. It puts forth new and creative powers. It heals its own wounds. There is no stint or limit to it. It is full and free. The will of the offender, with all his offences, is caught up within the superior, the redeeming will. Nor can the superior will wait to be propitiated. Neither by God nor by man may that be done and the Moral Law abide in its perfection of creative force. If man, sinned against, draws back into his innocence, and waits until the offender comes to himself, he abandons his little world to the Devil. And if God, sinned against, holds Himself aloof, guards Himself within His majesty and holiness, He resigns His rights of creative guidance. He gainsays Himself, if He waits to be propitiated.

The forgiveness is wrought out in silence. If it publishes itself, it mars and spoils itself. The innocent friend, in the secret chamber of his own heart, by forgiveness welds his will to the will of the offender. And God, in the silence of His own infinitude, through

His free and unwearying grace knits His will to the will of sinning man.

Forgiveness goes before punishment and so makes punishment efficient. The Law becomes a self-executing Law. The guilty one becomes his own judge and dooms himself. In parents and teachers the Moral Law becomes through love the other self, the larger self of children and scholars. So when punishment must be inflicted, the offender becomes a co-assessor. Shall God be outdone in educational methods by His creatures? Nay, our conception of the Moral Law in its beauty is but the reflection of His holy will. He forgives us in order to make our punishment thorough; His judgments pierce us through. If morality were an abstract code, God would stand helpless before sin. But morality is not a code. It is the creative will, the will of God making men in His image. The divine forgiveness reinstates the Law within the will of the offender. Punishment becomes efficient. The father must live within his boy if he is to punish him. God must maintain His life within the sinner, else His punish-

ments go wide. But the will of the sinner who has been forgiven and redeemed is transformed into the judgment seat. The voice that condemns is the man's own voice. He cannot escape himself.

Forgiveness alone makes a full repentance possible. It was the presence of Christ, the Perfect Life, in the house of the tax-gatherer that enabled him to stand up in noble shame and confess his sins. So the free forgiveness of God enables the sinner to repent.

Through forgiveness God triumphantly asserts the majesty of the Moral Law, not in Heaven, but in our hearts. His perfect and changeless will takes up into itself our sinful and wandering wills. It is when we have sinned against Him and been forgiven that we enter into the full joy and wonder of our intimacy with Him. By faith in His perfection and in His redemptive purpose toward us our will, finding itself within His will, is steadied and renewed.

This is the meaning of justification by faith. We do grievous injury to a supreme conception, when we think of justification as a process going on solely between us and God, a purely religious process iso-

lated and detached from everyday human business. For in truth it is a universal human process. Where men and women go deep into life, it becomes as much a matter of course as the law of gravitation. Suppose that my friends believe greatly in me. How they can think so highly of me passes my understanding. Yet I must needs rise by faith to their estimate of me. Their ideal of me is far above me, yet it is I. I am justified by faith in their faith.

But while justification is a deeply human process, just for that reason it finds its ground and explanation in God. God through Christ makes a supreme offer to man. He holds out to man the offer of human perfection, personal and social. The appeal of Christ pierces our hearts. Sinners that we are, we assent by faith to God's great proposal, we accept His offer. And then, it is not an artificial and arbitrary law, but a natural and necessary law, that makes the perfection of Christ our second nature. In justification by faith as friendship knows it, my friends' ideal of me becomes my real self. In justification by faith as God ordains it, the sinful and wandering will of

man is caught up into the holy and omnipotent will of God. The perfection of Christ becomes the attribute and property of those who believe in Him. The creative will of God houses itself within the struggling will. Justification is the enabling action of God whereby it becomes possible for sinful and wavering men to hold fast to their belief in the best, their faith in perfect fellowship.

Thus the supreme problem, the problem of Law, is finally solved. The Christian gives his will to God, and God endows the Christian's will with radiant energy. Every believer in Jesus gives his life and will to God in order that God may speak His mind to men. All true Christians cast their desires and plans in a common mould. Through mutual reverence, through restraint and service, they earn the freedom of God's City, claim and exercise the right to live within one another. So by means of a common aim and common prayer they create a corporate being and will. Out of this corporate will, with a power that grows as the generations succeed one another on the earth, is published and proclaimed the Moral Law for the nations.

CHAPTER IX

THE ATONING LIFE

THE road we have taken to bring us to our subject may seem long and devious. But if we are to have in these days a view of the Atonement that shall stir the emotions and quicken the pulse, we must make sure of our line of approach. The art of putting a great question is quite as important as the question itself. To many of us the old view of the Atonement no longer appeals. How, then, shall we conceive it, that we may make it inevitable? For inevitable it must be, if it is to be worth our while. Therefore to get the right line of approach has been our aim thus far.

The logic of life has brought us to this position. The pith of divine and human reality is the creative will that founds and upholds good society. This will is the spring and source of Law. The aim of

the Law is the individuality of those whom it governs. Its method is a restraint on the part of the lawmaker which is commensurate with his power. Power, taken by itself, even though it be omnipotent power, is not moral, nor can it master moral beings. It can crush and silence the weaker power. But it cannot interpret and convince. The end of the Law is individuality or freedom. Reverence for individuality and the restraint that grows from it is the primary quality amongst those who seek to build the Kingdom of God, that is to say, the commonwealth of man. The fellowship of free men, each possessed of infinite value in the eyes of all, is the moral ideal, the essence of the Moral Law. In the nature and will of God, as God's Christ and God's Word reveal Him, the Law is grounded. Impossible as it sometimes seems to believe it, restraint is as deep in God as power. By the divine restraint an open space is cleared within the infinitude and eternity of being. And in that space, with the everlasting arms around us, we grow up into self-knowledge and self-mastery. Made like God, we mingle restraint with our power. We would

rather lose our own souls than so assert our rights as to injure the rights of others. And when we have once tasted of this salvation, when, ourselves redeemed, we live the redeeming life, we find that not for one hour can we live to ourselves or by ourselves. We live, if we truly live, unto the Lord. We live with our fellow-believers in divine and human goodness. All of us together put our being into a corporate being, our interests into a common hope, our wills into a corporate will. God's holy will, working through this personal and corporate will, grounds the Law and publishes the Law.

When the Law that guards the ideal of perfect human fellowship is broken, when one human will sins against another human will or against the divine will, our minds are shut up to one course of action. The creative will in God and man, facing sin, is forced by its own constitution and nature to forgive sin. The forgiveness must be full and free. It cannot wait for propitiation. It will not deal in halfway measures. It must be free, else the nature of the Law is denied. It must be full, because only so can the belief in

fellowship triumph over the sin that assails it. The essence of sin is the breach it makes in relationship, its denial of fellowship, its exaltation of self. The essence of the Law is relationship and fellowship. So then a forgiveness that is full and free is the one course of action open to the stewards and guardians of the Law. Only in this way can the innocent and holy will assert its right to go on living within the sinful and offending will. Law, as the Christian's experience forces him to think of it, here discloses its inmost nature. Forgiveness is the self-defence of the Law when its majesty is assailed and the ideal underlying it denied. Forgiveness is the inevitable action of that holy will which is the source of moral sanity and cleansing criticism, when the selfishness and vulgarity of mankind strive to make true society impossible.

The fact of forgiveness is, then, the prerogative and critical fact in which the genius of the Moral Law shines out with convincing power and beauty. But what is the full scope of the fact? What are our findings, when we take deep soundings of the fact?

Within forgiveness the Atonement as a process and an action is partly hidden and partly revealed. For the revelation is only in part. In the very nature of things this must be so. Every fact which is large enough to have permanent standing before reason becomes a mystery and a problem. And the fact of forgiveness, the ultimate fact under the conception of Law, necessarily opens into mystery. The traditional name for that mystery is Atonement.

Atonement and forgiveness are not two facts related to one another as cause and effect. When we so conceive them, we make artificial difficulties for reason. They do not constitute a sequence in time. If we put them in that light, we are bound to mistake the inmost meaning of both. The Atonement is the secret of forgiveness, the process and action of the living will which through forgiveness publishes the moral Law, not on Sinai, but in the heart of the offender. Atonement and forgiveness must not, even for a moment, be separated in our thought. They constitute an indivisible action which we may describe from different positions, but which we cannot, without

fatally injuring the unity of Christian experience, take apart in our analysis or separate in our doctrine.

Atonement is not an arbitrary action. When we get a clear view of the divine nature, we see that the Atonement is necessary for God. Without it He would deny Himself, and resign His place as the Holy and Creative One whose nature and whose will are the ground and reason of the Moral Law. God must forgive sin, God must make atonement for sin. Otherwise He is not the God and Father of our Saviour, it is not His word that comes to us when Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The Atonement is not a process peculiar to God. On the contrary, it springs from the very nature and constitution of the creative life in all its forms. It belongs to the frame of moral government. In some sense, it is a universal human process. And the hope of our acquiring a vital hold on the divine atonement in Christ lies in a clear apprehension of this universal quality. Let us suppose that we are, in deed and in truth, followers of Jesus, that we have His mind and

make His plan our personal rule of life. Thanks to Him, the Kingdom of God is not up in the clouds. It is as real as politics and trade. In the strength of His life we ask ourselves, Who is my neighbor? And of ourselves, inspired by Him, we answer, It is the man and the woman farthest away from us, between whom and ourselves yawns the deepest gulf of prejudice and tradition. We make ourselves morally responsible for our world. With our life's blood we sign an immense bond. We will carry the law of human fellowship into every part of human experience.

And then — what befalls us? Wounds come to us from all sides. We give hurts to our dearest friends and they give hurts to us. The world is filled with breaches of the law of fellowship. We can insure ourselves after a fashion by shaping some kind of an aristocracy. We can build a high wall around a certain portion of social being. Inside the pale we find our peers, between whom and us social obligation is strong. Outside the pale is a less binding form of social obligation. But the insurance is very imperfect.

Within the pale private war in many forms is carried on. If I am to be with all my strength a member of society, I must view even this limited and sometimes extremely insignificant portion of social existence in the light of its relation to the Kingdom of God. All the pains and hurts my social life can bring me I must take up into the creative will within my heart.

But when I do that, the pale is down. If it is only by viewing my so-called peers in the light our Lord has brought into the world that I can play my part as a member of good society, then the ground of peculiar privilege is cut from under my feet. A social pale no longer exists. True fellowship, if it exists at all, is universal.

Fellowship, when we enter into it with our whole being, both reveals and conceals the Atonement. Conceals it, because the atoning life that makes good the breaches in the Moral Law works silently, in the deep of life; it is never on the surface, the sound of its operation is never heard in the streets. Reveals it, because whenever we get down to the foundations of fellowship, we find the fact of the Atonement, the

divine and human necessity of it. If we discard for a while all specific theories about the Atonement; and if, going farther in our desire to keep inside our actual knowledge, we even disuse for a time the specific term "atonement" and substitute a general phrase, then our best experience goes into the conviction that the atoning life lies at the roots of good society.

My friend and I — if I sin against him, what shall he do? Stand on his dignity? Shut himself up within his innocence? Nurse his wound until it festers? Leave me to myself to find out my fault in all its grievousness and then come to him confessing my sin? Imprisoned within his goodness, he makes himself an egotist, caring more for his hurts than for the majesty of the Moral Law which shines forth so clearly in friendship. If he stays long within his self-made prison, his goodness will become the goodness of a prig. But he dare not shut himself within his consciousness of innocence. Only by taking the shame of my sin as his own, by gladly bearing the pain it gives him, can he be true to himself. In

healing silence he makes atonement to the ideal of friendship in his heart, makes atonement for my sin, and so makes good my breach in the Moral Law.

What shall the father do when his boy transgresses? Let his fatherhood be what it ought to be, the finest form of comradeship. In the fullest sense he lives his life within his boy's life. He uses his vantage-ground of years and experience, not as a judgment-seat on some little Sinai from which to thunder at his boy, but as an interpreter who seeks to lead the boy into clear self-knowledge and self-mastery. With the uttermost reverence he treats his boy's right to himself. And in proportion to his reverence is his intimacy. The mystery of intimacy is not for those who dominate others, but for those who treat others of their peers. The father, true comrade to his boy, ruling him by reverence and through interpretation of life, — when his boy grievously transgresses, what shall he do? He makes the shame of the sin his own. His grief over it is keener than his boy's can possibly be, because he knows far more of the forces of evil. He knows how sin breeds sins. Looking into the depths of Satan

in society and in his own heart, his boy's transgression racks him with pain. But he does not substitute a sermon for sympathy. He takes the shame of the sin as his own shame. He makes atonement for his son to the Law whose seat is within his will.

In society at large the same order of experience holds. The personal life and the corporate life are inseparable. In proportion to our growth in self-knowledge and self-mastery is our need of self-expression in terms of fellowship. This involves an increasing measure of social sympathy and social responsibility. A great-hearted American is cut to the heart by America's shortcomings. Her sins against the ideal of democracy and justice are felt like personal wounds. When an American who has an immense fortune breaks through the laws that catch and hold the American who is without fortune, he himself suffers outrage. By bearing the pains and shame of the nation's life as his own, he makes atonement to the national ideal in his heart. And so his criticism of his nation becomes cleansing and creative criticism. Because he lives the atoning life, he has

the right to judge. And his judgments have penetrating and renovating power.

The Atonement is the price paid by God and man for the right to forgive. Our right to forgive is an ultimate and basic right. It is inseparable from our high position as stewards and administrators of the Moral Law. When we become persons, we become, to use Aristotle's fine phrase, unwritten laws, the seat and source of the living law that sways and guides the passions of mankind. As freemen we administer the law for freemen. Our right to forgive is a supreme right. Without it we cannot efficiently administer and execute the Moral Law. We forgive in order to carry out the Law, incarnate it in the lives of sinful men and make it self-executing. For this our sovereign right we are willing and eager to pay a proportionate price. We live the atoning life and bear atoning pains.

Dare we presume to know God's inner nature? How poorly we know ourselves! We have hardly more than the promise of personality. But in the light of that promise we live and work, strong to do and strong to bear, waiting for the perfect day. Our

knowledge of ourselves comes to us transfigured by the knowledge of God which shines through it. It is His self-revelation that gives unity and sanity, meaning and power, to our experience. The little candle of self-knowledge in us is the candle of the Lord. We dare to take the mystery of things upon us. We dare to speak, not as God's spies, but as God's friends. Nay, we dare not be silent. We should deny God and shame ourselves if we did not say that the atoning life is a necessity for God. It is not an arbitrary action hanging upon His sovereign and inscrutable will. It is an eternal process of His nature. His will and being are the Moral Law. When we sin against His will and transgress His commandments, it is no more possible for Him than for us to wait to be propitiated. He works out His own propitiation. He makes atonement to Himself. We have no share nor part in it. It is all His own. He lives the atoning life within the wills of His sinful children. So he asserts His right to forgive. In our hearts He publishes afresh the Moral Law, which is His holy will. And His judgments become a two-edged sword, piercing

even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Christ so masters our conscience and interprets our life that we place Him between God and ourselves. It is the essence of our faith that in seeing Him we see God. Through His humanity we feel and know the Deity. We outgrow the mystic's plan to transcend the human in order to get clear and saving vision of the divine. To our youthful experience it seemed a brave plan, and upon it we built many a philosophical scheme. But having grown up to Christ, we have reduced our childish thoughts to nothing. We look in His face and hear Him say, as He said to Philip, "Have I been so long a time with you and yet you have not known me?" Neither beneath Him nor above Him nor around Him but through Him do we go to the abiding reality and meaning of life. The power and appeal of His Person holds us fast in our station. Through His humanity alone can we see the Deity. He sets us our task. We intend to realize the Kingdom of God in terms of human

fellowship. He gives us our strength and confidence. We go about our great task with never a thought of failure. Heaven does not distract us, but rather steadies our aim. We are in the world with all our might. But our being is from God. We are God's fellow-laborers. He and we together are building good society. Through our wills knitting together into a corporate will He gives to the world its Law. And through our lives He takes the world's sin upon Himself and makes atonement for it.

The atoning life of God is an organic process within His creative unity. When we put the question in the right way, the answer to it is as inevitable as the laws of nature. God's place of self-revelation is in the depth of the common life and lot, its glorifying wants and ennobling hopes. Here He speaks His saving words. Standing in this place, the thoughts of the Apostles become our personal thoughts. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19). Without any connection with our

merits and deserts God exhibited in our midst the life and death of Christ as a place of atonement, a meeting-place between God and man (Rom. iii. 21–25). Hither comes the sinful, wandering will of man, doubting human perfection, despairing about the supreme hope. And here in Christ man sees his will taken up into the mystery and unity of the divine will. He appropriates as his own the words of St. John, "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin."

CHAPTER X

THE HEALING QUESTION

IN a great crisis of English politics Sir Harry Vane published a plan of political reform under the title "The Healing Question." I venture to borrow it and apply it to the fact and mystery of the Atonement, to indicate its bearing upon our lives when we take our experience in its entire scope.

We have reached our goal. The word "atonement" was purposely avoided in the statement of the theme, because it has been applied for many centuries to the work of Christ in dealing with sin. The Person of Christ in its full relation to human experience and hope on the one side, to divine being and power on the other, is the subject of systematic theology. With the Atonement as wrought out in Christ we are not concerned except in so far as it is the fulfilment of

the logic of the common life. It is the atoning life in God and man that has been the subject of our study.

We have sought to make clear the line of study which may render the Atonement a living doctrine, quick with appeal and inspiration. We have found the centre of interest and attention. It is that discovery which makes a student. The real student in any field is not the man who knows, but the man whom some specific question, drawing and riveting his attention, puts under heavy bonds, so that at all costs he seeks for knowledge. Even so in this field. If the atoning life is once seen to be a necessary process and action for all who would live nobly, then they are bound to trace the atoning life to its roots and to find its intelligible ground in the being and will of God.

The supreme problem, as we have seen, is Law. Religion is our deepest need, not only because we cannot save our souls from deadly fears in any other way, but because religion alone can bring our minds to rest upon a solid ground for Law. The Christian religion owes its enduring supremacy in the world to the way in which it answers the problem. The

self-revelation of the Divine Unity gives unity and sanity to man's experience. And the incorporation of the Divine Unity in a supreme Person gives the Divine Unity irresistible power.

An immense gain is secured for clarity of thought and straightforwardness in action when the whole debate regarding reality and life can be summed up in one decisive proposition. That proposition, as the Christian puts it when his consciousness is clear, runs thus: The whole being and power of God, the innermost being of things, and the uttermost resources of the invisible Universe are pledged to the realization of the Kingdom of God.

This proposition determines the centre of gravity in our thought about things. It is not the inner being of God except in so far as God Himself reveals Himself to us. It is the fact and mystery of human unity, through which alone the Divine Unity is fittingly revealed. In Rom. ix–xi and in the Epistle to the Ephesians this is wrought out by St. Paul with great force and beauty. To this point the Christian consciousness must rigidly hold itself if it would think

upon the Atonement along the lines of the Word of God.

The proving-ground of this mystery is not the cell of the monastic mystic nor the study of the speculative theologian. It is the unity of a definite group of human beings constituting what is called a religious congregation. In the ethics of the New Testament, — in Rom. xii–xv and in 1 John, for example, — this is the sum and substance of the matter. In Phil. i. 27–ii. 11 the Incarnation is brought forward in order that it may serve as the spring of intense and intimate human unity. Mysticism and Philosophy would be altogether too easy a way of understanding God. Only they have the key to the divine mysteries who subject their whole being and will to the apparently impossible task of realizing the Kingdom of God.

The Saviour by His presence puts all at stake in the question — Do you believe in the Kingdom of God? The grace and power of His Person enable us to say, Yes, with my whole heart. The Christian consciousness, gathering radiant energy from age to

age, grips and holds us. The sweet and glorifying joys of friendship and the family life give us all a home-acre where the union of the divine and the human is not an enkindling promise but a blessed reality. Christ and His Church and life together give us secure standing-ground in a world whose apparent forces rage furiously against Christ's plan. The Kingdom of God is within our reach. This is the gladsome and gladdening news, the joyous and refreshing story of God, — the Gospel.

The Christian is the only reverent Agnostic. His agnosticism is a part of his experience of revelation. He knows the living God just enough to know that he is known and loved by God. The creative Unity of God in his heart becomes the base and ground of a human unity deeper and more abiding than all racial and national, all sectarian and social divisions.

When the Christian finds the centre of gravity for thought and feeling in the mystery of human unity, and when he has dedicated his powers and faculties and possessions to the realization of this supreme hope, then he begins to enter deeply into the nature

and meaning of prayer. In Rom. viii. 24, St. Paul says, It was for the supreme hope that we were saved. Then in verse 25 he speaks of what Chrysostom happily called the queen of Christian virtues, patience and stanchness, the large-mindedness and the long-mindedness which must needs be the fundamental qualities in men and women who are looking for the Day of God. And then — let us note carefully the sequence of thought — the Apostle goes on to speak of prayer. We pray for the Kingdom of God as our dear Lord hath taught us. But the inertia and brutality and selfishness of human nature in us and about us makes the Kingdom of God seem like a fairy story in which things happened a long time ago or far away beyond an impassable sea. With yearnings and longings unutterable we strain to make it a present good. Then within our hearts the mystery of the divine being is unclosed. Within our prayer we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. God praying to God! God pledging Himself to man! We go forth from our prayers into a hostile or indifferent world, seeking for tasks that the worldling calls impossible.

We look into our own hearts and take full account of our cowardice, our love of ease, our infidelity, our sin. We look out upon history and see rising out of its depths, as the seer in the Book of Daniel saw them, one form after another, half human and half brute, visions of world-empire and world-trade. Man is a wolf to man. The pitiful refuge of the cliff-dwellers is in our view; the battlefields where Christians have slaughtered one another; the slums where humanity reeks and rots; the social evil, the vilest among our manifold disgraces; the numberless private griefs and wrongs; the poignant appeal of human pain. With eyes unveiled we see our world.

But the pain and the sin and the shame we make our own. We live the atoning life. We put our being into the corporate being of the Church of Christ. Our prayers are common prayers. Our wills interknitted constitute a common will. And from that will issues the world's higher law. Here and there it moulds life to its liking. Here and there appear portions of the life that is truly redeemed, where the sting of selfishness is taken from pain and where the

corporate will of man gives promise of its power to banish evil. We give ourselves to our fellows in order to know and master ourselves. We do not think of sacrifice as an end in itself. We sacrifice ourselves in order to assert ourselves in the highest way. We rule our neighbors by living in them and bearing their burdens. The atoning life is our last word about ourselves. It is our last, our deepest word about God. Thanks be to Him, it is our most intimate obligation. Through Christ and His fellowship the being and beauty of God speak home to us. It is the ministry of beauty to restore and freshen our confidence in our world. So long as the spell is on us, the sincerity of the universe is a thing certain and assured. Even so is it with the creative unity of God in Christ. Through the Saviour we enter upon our heritage. The thrill of possession runs through us. People with no abiding place, who have somehow come into the inheritance of an old estate, know what a joy it is to walk their bounds. The folk whom Christ hath redeemed enjoy this thrill of possession in its sweetest and purest form. They have inherited

the earth. Please God, at some far-off day, — whether it be a hundred years or a hundred thousand, it is not theirs to think or say, — righteousness and right shall rule in the affairs of men. The sting shall be drawn from death and pain.

Bless us, dear God, with the vision of Thy being and beauty, that in the strength of it we may work without haste and without rest, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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